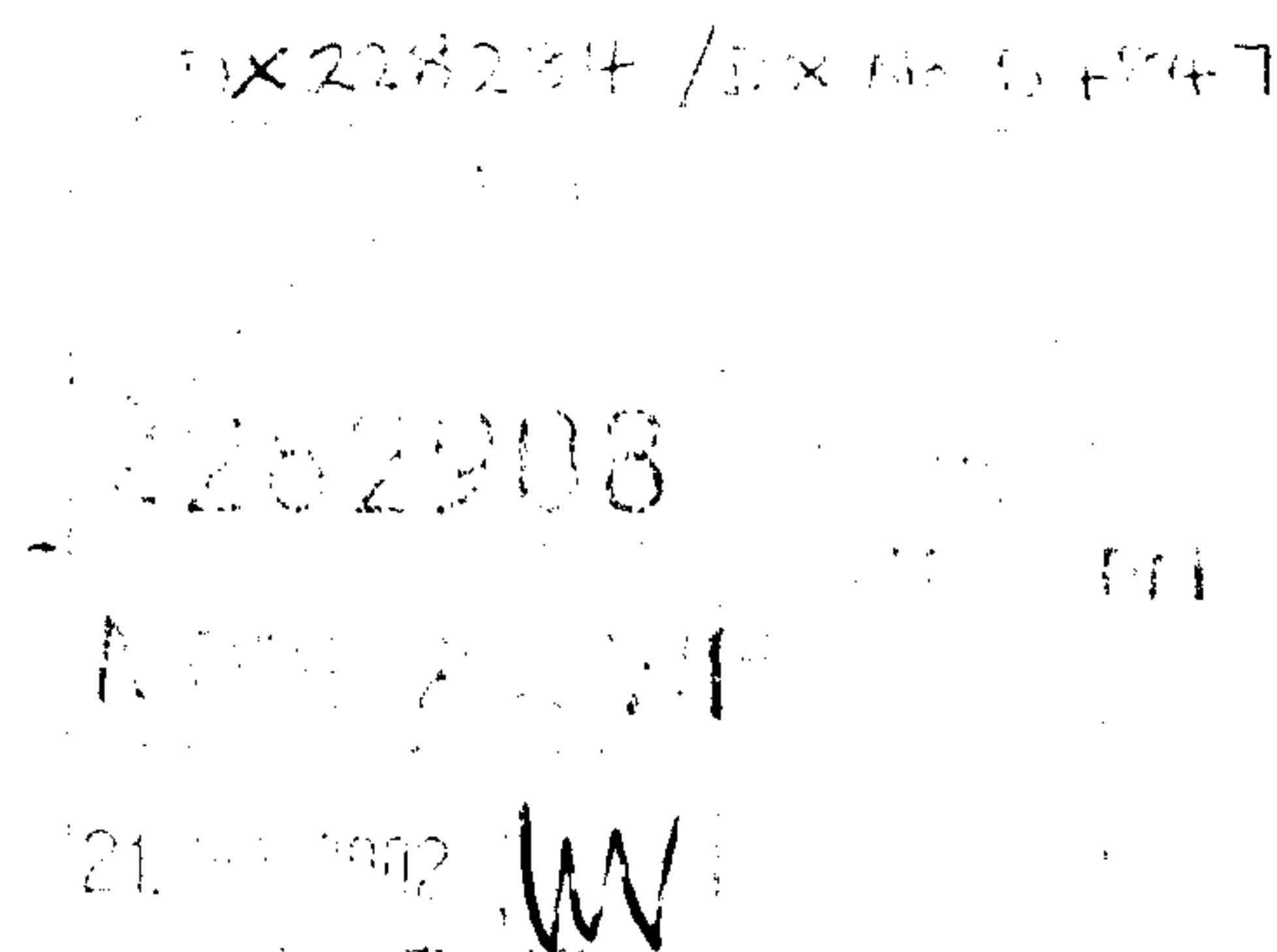


THE APPLICATION OF SOCIAL SEMIOTIC THEORY TO VISUAL ELEMENTS
WITHIN CORPORATE POSITIONING MATERIAL WITH A VIEW TO THE
DEVELOPMENT OF METHODOLOGIES FOR COMMERCIAL USE

THESIS IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

BY

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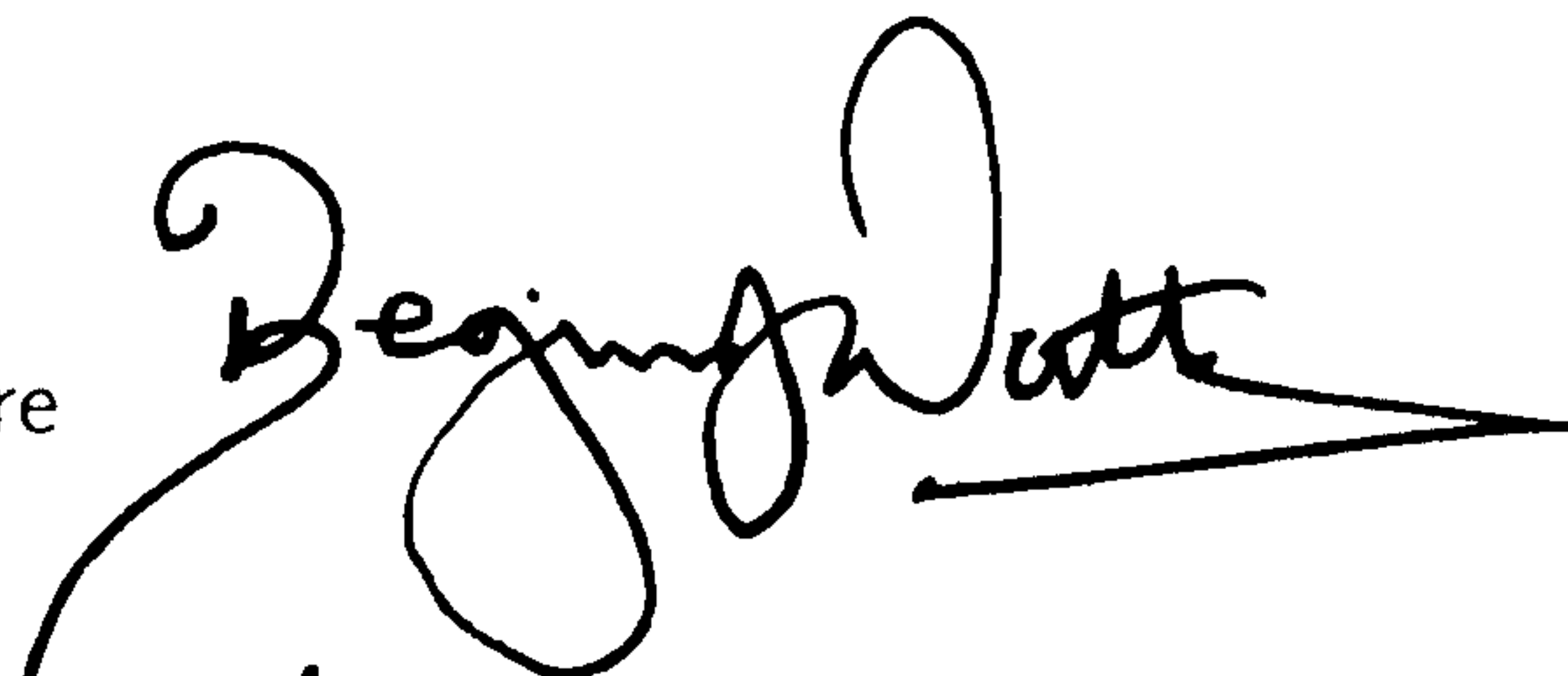


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Without the help of the above I would not have finished this work.

Reginald Watts

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Abstract

This work employs a variety of social semiotic and critical discourse techniques to develop methodologies that will assess the extent to which external positioning requirements of commercial organisations are expressed accurately in the visual imagery of their corporate artefacts.

The automotive manufacturer The Rover Group was chosen to test the assessment through visual analysis of three brochures published by the company during the period 1995-97. The meanings expressed visually in the brochures were compared with the communications requirements of the Board of Directors of the Group. For the enquiry a series of templates were developed which were informed, inter alia, by concepts expressed by Kress and van Leeuwen in their work *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (1996).

My analysis suggests significant discrepancies occur between the positioning messages intended by the board of directors for projection externally and their expression in visual terms within the company's corporate literature.

The thesis identifies where these disjunctures occur and suggests methodological templates for use by communications practitioners not trained in semiotic theory or critical discourse analysis to reduce the level of subjectivity in their analysis.

The Rover Group was chosen for testing the templates because changes in ownership and structure of the company enabled me to use what would have been commercially sensitive material if the company had remained unchanged.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Page No.

CHAPTER I :	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF STUDY.....	1
CHAPTER II:	CONTEXT OF THE THESIS.....	5
CHAPTER III:	ROVER GROUP RESEARCH.....	22
CHAPTER IV:	CORPORATE POSITIONING, DEFINITION AND FUNCTION	45
CHAPTER V:	SEMIOTICS AND DISCOURSE: ITS RELEVANCE TO SOCIAL SEMIOTIC THEORY AND CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS	54
CHAPTER VI:	KRESS AND VAN LEEUWEN, DESCRIPTION OF THEIR WORK	84
CHAPTER VII:	DEVELOPING A METHODOLOGY.....	126
CHAPTER VIII:	APPLICATION OF METHODOLOGY TO ROVER BROCHURES.....	209
CHAPTER IX:	EXTENT TO WHICH POSITIONING REQUIREMENTS MET BY SIGNMAKER	297
CHAPTER X :	SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	314
APPENDIX:	Exhibit A: Topic Menu for Interviews with Rover Group	
	Exhibit B: Background History and Development of Rover company	
	Exhibit C: 5th Sam Epelle Memorial Lecture, Lagos, 1992	

DIAGRAMS AND ILLUSTRATIONS: (Page numbers show preceding page)

Figure 1	Rover Audit Construct	20
Figure 2	Topic Menus Interview Quotes	26
Figure 3	Perceptual Conflicts in Marque Values	34
Figure 4	Intellectual High Ground - Issues to be Faced	39
Figure 5	Polysemic Classification	140
Figure 6	Summary of Meaning Levels	175
Figure 7	Corporate Ethnography - Paradigm Choices (blank table)	202
Figure 8	Corporate Ethnography-Toyota Paradigm Choices (completed)	202
Figure 9	AIDA Summary (blank, double page)	282
Figure 10	AIDA Summary (completed, double page)	282

Figure 11	Corporate Ethnography-Paradigm Choices (Rover Completed)	278
Figure 12	Comparative Analysis Check List (blank)	286
Figure 13	Comparative Analysis Check List (completed)	289
Figure 14	Rover Group Summary of Visual Changes 1995-1997....	317
Illustration A:	Toyota Photograph (Colour)	174
Illustration B:	Toyota Photograph (Black & White).....	176
Illustration C:	Copies of Rover Brochures	

brochures of the positioning strategy required by the board for the Rover Group. There appeared to be failures of understanding by the publishing executives and designers (hereafter referred to simply as 'the sign-makers') as to what would appeal to, or reject, certain target readers. There was a lack of understanding of the underlying orders of meaning that could be derived in socio-cultural terms from the signification. In some cases there was a disjuncture between the visual and its accompanying written text.

Bearing in mind the growing importance of corporate reputation building in the commercial field and of the visual as a mode of communication, I set out to meet two objectives. These are to identify the degrees of certainty and probability of where corporate material reflects accurately the needs of the board in strategic terms. Then, of equal importance in terms of the practical application of semiotics, to develop template methodologies to help reduce the level of subjectivity which appears to exist when visual texts are discussed by managers and signed off by heads of department before final production.

It should be said at the outset that epistemologically the analytical approach here described can only *reduce* the level of uncertainty, it cannot remove it. This occurs by reductionism which focuses the attention of the communications analyst on a series of small discrete elements within the processes by which meaning is transferred. Much of the knowledge of commercial communication held by practitioners is empirically based. This is in the sense they have learnt 'by experience' (a phrase frequently used in response to one of my questions to managers on training was "we learn by sitting next to Nelly"), there is no required level of theoretical or craft skills consistently demanded by employers for such posts (see p.204). My reductionist approach does, I believe, force the public affairs team to concentrate on a range of narrowly defined items and in so doing reduces the subjective element within their analysis by forcing them to concentrate on the nature of what is under discussion.

CHAPTER I

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The specific objectives of my study are to:

- Consider the communications requirements of the Rover Group board in relation to their corporate positioning within external and internal stakeholder audiences.
- Assess the extent to which their requirements were met in visual terms within the corporate brochures published by the Group during the period 1995-1997.
- Make that assessment by the application of social semiotic theory and critical discourse analysis having selected from those disciplines relevant concepts.
- Undertake the application of these concepts by means of template questionnaires.
- Make comparison of the requirements set by the Rover board with the visual aspects of their corporate brochures and draw conclusions that may have relevance to the day to day work of communications practitioners.

The thesis achieves these objectives by means of the following structure. Chapter II consists of a summary of the context within which the work takes place. It is a description of the growing importance of corporate reputation and how it differs from what is usually termed 'marketing communications' (advertising, point of sale material, sales literature, etc.).

Chapter III describes the data collected as a result of interviews carried out with the board of directors of the Rover Group. This data led to my development for them of a corporate positioning which later became incorporated into their company strategy. The positioning ingredients described in the final section of Chapter III were signed off by the chief executive officer at the time, John Towers (later to return to the company in its restructured independent form) and the director of public affairs (also then a board director) Bernard Carey (who later moved to a similar position with the BMW company). The chapter lists the ingredients the board wished to see carried through within their communications material.

The concept of corporate positioning as an extension of corporate reputation and how it has evolved from product positioning is described in Chapter IV. Before analysing the Rover Group material which consisted of three annual brochures, Chapter V contains a description of relevant theories of discourse and semiotics and their development into the techniques of social semiotics and critical discourse analysis used as a foundation for my templates.

Chapter VI takes the published work of Kress and Van Leeuwen in their book *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* and summarises how the

authors applied the theories of social semiotics and critical discourse analysis to the transference of meaning by visual (as opposed to linguistic) texts. This work informed the models used in my research. It became apparent, however, that whereas the concepts they describe offered a mode of analysis, the format within which those concepts were grouped was not viable within my commercial aims. In Chapter VII, therefore, I develop a methodology informed by the work of Kress and van Leeuwen and explain why a new model was needed, albeit using many of the same ingredients but within a different framework. In this Chapter VII, my new model is tested on a Toyota photograph selected from the company's 1995 Annual Report. The Toyota company was selected because it was within the same manufacturing industry and its corporate communications was aimed at a similar target group to that of the Rover Group. Because I was unencumbered by background knowledge of Toyota's intentions I could test the methodology separately from any instructions that may have been given to the sign-makers. Chapter VIII is a description of the development and application of the templates to the three Rover brochures published over the consecutive years 1995, 1996 and 1997.

The last two chapters (IX and X) describe the results obtained by the research, compares the corporate positioning requirements of the board of the Rover Group with their visual articulation in three brochures and identifies where disjunctures appear to occur. In the process I suggest areas where the application of social semiotics and critical discourse analysis appears to uncover difficulties in the expression of boardroom policy in corporate visual terms. The last part of Chapter IX includes a section on the comparison of one brochure (1995) in visual terms against the later (1996 and 1997) versions. Where

possible I have made assumptions concerning the applicability of the methodology I employ to the daily work of communications managers generally.

The thesis, therefore, considers the problems inherent in the transference of corporate external strategy requirements by means of the visual elements of published corporate material. It identifies through the use of templates failures on the part of sign-makers to transfer those corporate communications messages into a visual format.

CHAPTER II

THE CONTEXT OF THE THESIS

Commercial communication during the last decade has changed its emphasis from 'selling the product to selling the company'. What is termed corporate positioning, corporate image, corporate reputation or corporate identity, today takes centre stage equal in importance to that of the marketing and sales function, (see later). Miller (2001, p.39) quotes Van Riel of the Rotterdam School of Management, saying, "Global competition has increased greatly, but it has also led to a lack of differentiation between products and services ... reputation is the only thing that distinguishes your company."

Because the targets of such corporate activity include not only the customer but, inter alia, the government, the financial market, local communities and the wider business infrastructure, the subject of corporate communications has become a significant item on board room agendas. Projecting a consistent message to each target public is crucial to a company's success. This is especially so as the demand grows for more transparency in relation to the culture and philosophy which drives commercial concerns. In parallel, there has been a steady growth in the importance of the visual, i.e. non-linguistic, as a significant channel of communication to the public and to specialist audiences in what is termed 'business to business communications'. Despite this expansion in the use of visual communication the majority of practitioners are still trained primarily in the use of the written word. They tend to view visual channels as in need of words to support them, to explain their content or to draw the reader's attention to the written text.

My review of texts which discuss these issues within corporate communications (Olins 1989, Taylor 1994, Mandelson 1996, Morley 1998, Dowling 1994, Hirschorn 2000, Hockings 1995, Nash 1999, Lewis 1997, Jenkins 1991, Temporal and Alder 1998, Ries 1999, Bose 1998, Pollock 1999, Jennings 1994, Mallinson 1996, Lidstone 1998) either show a concern with written communication and fail to provide techniques that enable the practitioner to 'read' pictures as they would read and check written texts produced for company use, or they deal with visual graphics but fail to provide a visual grammar suitable for use by a practitioner untrained in visual communications.

Companies such as Semiotic Solutions Ltd. (founded 1987) have pioneered the adaptation of cultural theory to market research and analysis especially in the development of advertising, packaging and product formats. Greg Rowland Ltd (founded (1994) also specialises in consulting on product brands from a semiotic view point of view. But as stated above there appears to be no systematic methodology available for use by practitioners who lack prior knowledge, specifically for use in the corporate communications area.

Any review of relevant texts concerning linguistic theory, however, (Althusser 1971, Barthes 1993, 1967, 1970, 1977, 1981, Bignell 1997, Blonsky 1985, Coulthard 1997, Culler 1981, 1990, 1997, Eco 1972, 1977, 1984, 1998, Foucault 1972, Guiraud 1975, Halliday 1972, 1978, 1985, Sarap 1993, Sapir 1949, Gee 1999, et al) shows there is a considerable body of work which describes concepts that challenge and reorient thinking in the field of linguistic texts. The application, for example, of semiotic theory and critical discourse

analysis has revolutionised the way we examine and read the written word. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996, reprinted 2001) have examined the theories of social semiotics and critical discourse analysis and developed elements of such concepts into techniques available for use in the development of a visual grammar. My goal is to provide a solution to the problems described above which is that commercial managers need analytical tools suitable for application to visual communications at a corporate, as opposed to a sales and marketing level. It is my intention to fill that gap in the published literature.

The corporate practitioner needs tools that can be applied to the printed literature which lies outside the realm of written texts to project the strategic message emanating from the company boardroom. This realm of the visual includes not only photographs and drawings but corporate design systems, page layouts and logos.

The methodology used here has been based upon the work of Kress and van Leeuwen but adapted for commercial use. From this adaptation a series of analytical templates have been developed suitable for use in varying formats by practitioners untrained in social semiotics and critical discourse analysis. To my knowledge, such an application of linguistic theory to the corporate commercial field, especially in regard to the non-linguistic, has not been attempted before. My aim is to develop a commercially oriented model that can form the basis of a methodology utilising templates suitable in their control systems for day-to-day use in the corporate communications departments of commercial organisations.

The role of corporate communications and its importance in the creation of what

is termed corporate positioning or corporate branding (see later for definitions) has grown. Published research shows it plays an increasing role in corporate life. Worcester (1997), in devising a model for measurement of corporate reputation, argues that, "Business success depends upon building and continuing to develop mutual beneficial relationships with critical audiences" (1997, p.259). He (Worcester 1997) goes on to say that "successful company values are in tune with those of their key audiences, or they are either in decline or in the wrong business."

Worcester believes (1997, p.259) a "company's relationships with key audiences can be defined according to the critical dimensions of these relationships as defined by the audience, and these differ by audience, prescribed by each audience's own value structure". In effect he is saying that different audiences apply a different set of criteria when assessing or developing a relationship with a company. The criteria of each audience group is based not only upon the psychological building blocks of that group but upon the socio-cultural group from which that group emerged. Althusser (1971) talks of the extent to which viewers are "constructed as subjects by cultural forces which 'interpellate' or address them." Culler (1997, p.46) talks about how "you are addressed as a particular sort of subject in advertisements".

The essence of these statements is developed later when the application of critical discourse analysis is considered in relation to commercial visual imagery. Historically (Watts 1970, p.9) the emphasis in commercial communications as an ingredient of the sales and marketing function has been on the company's products and services. More recently it has been realised that customers and clients are interested too in the company that produces products. Salama,

managing director of the Henley Centre for Forecasting, has commented (Salama 1993) that successful companies should develop corporate rather than product branding and emphasise service aspects, a view supported by Worcester, who notes (Worcester 1997) from the results of market research by his company for corporate clients over a period of two decades that “there is an almost straight-line relationship between product recommendation (by customers) and excellence of corporate image”. Writing in the *Journal of the Institute of Public Relations* (15 April 2001) Worcester discusses “the link between communications and corporate performance”, saying that “communications makes a difference, sometimes more than it perhaps should” and that “Mori’s studies of journalists reveal a close correlation between the ratings of companies’ press relations and overall favourability towards them.” He goes on to say that “coverage of a company in the business pages, for instance, is as strongly influenced by the company’s communications effectiveness as by its business performance.”

Once it is accepted that a corporation’s success relates as much to its corporate communications as to its product sales, then the need to ensure such communications is consistent becomes an obvious corollary. In fact, Turner (*Henley Management Update* Vol.11 Spring 2000) goes further, relating consistency of message to corporate success, saying “the more consistent the picture which is projected, the more likely a company is to be successful”, a factor which underpins my argument that unless communications practitioners have the tools available to analyse the visual media used for reaching external audiences, such consistency is difficult to achieve.

It is increasingly accepted by modern management that effective corporate communications has definite advantages. Balmer (Balmer 1995) quotes from Jenkins (1991, p.198) when he writes that "it (corporate positioning) underpins world class marketing organisations. It results in consistency in consumer demand; gives added value to products and services; contributes to a company's financial margins; affords protection from competitors and attracts top-notch personnel and is having a financial worth."

As the public, supported by the media, takes a growing interest in who makes the products they buy, the concept of the corporation per se appears to be moving towards centre stage in commercial marketing. King (1991, pp.3-13)) goes further and argues that "A strong and favourable, corporate brand is seen as having a number of distinct benefits. It is seen as the most important discrimination in an increasingly competitive commercial environment". A similar view, but given with a stance which emphasises an almost organic role for a company, is taken by Temporal and Adler (1998) when they argue that positioning adds force to corporate personality because it relates the 'person' to the competitive advantage. It sets the company apart, they say. The word 'person' here relates, of course, to the company and not the customer and by doing so moves my own argument forward to where later I argue that signmakers (i.e. those responsible for the signification process in creating commercial artefacts) define the viewers for whom they are encoding their message through their choices of signifier and signified. A suggestion supported by Temporal and Adler (ibid.) when later in their work, they suggest that positioning should seek to reflect the self-concept of the target customer. What

has then for many years been accepted as a growing function within corporate activity has more recently been seen as in need of further examination. The international research organisation Opinion Research Corporation, for example, completed a study of attitudes among senior managers in 100 international companies based in Europe, Asia and the United States (Global 100: Attitudes to Corporate Branding: a survey April 1999). Drawing upon their own data resulting from the research, they state in their Introduction:

There is little doubt based upon the evidence of this survey that corporate branding is now accepted as a key business issue around the world ... however, our research shows that too many employees in too many organisations do not really understand the language of corporate branding and therefore fail to make the connection between key corporate messages relating to company vision, mission and values and their own day-to-day activities ... yet it is also apparent that corporate branding is at a critical stage in its development mechanisms need to be found to measure the contribution it makes.

Of significance to my work is their comment (1999, Introduction) that “senior management have been instrumental in creating the messages *but less effective in disseminating them throughout the organisation*” (my emphasis). Hence there is a need for additional techniques for managers to apply to their analytical processes even when there exists a lack of training in applied semiotics among managers. There may be an understanding of the importance of corporate communications as we show above but the realisation of that importance in practical terms can fall short of the hopes and needs of managers because they

are unable to carry out such craft skills. Varey sees this as a continuing problem.

He writes:

Organisational communications are a complex interweaving of individuals relational communications, and while taken for granted as something all managers do, the skills and channels are little understood by many managers ... the narrowness of thinking is compounded by an apparently widespread assumption among managers that they are effective communicators, since being a good manager is equated with being a good communicator, even in the face of personal experience of significant communication failures ... whilst it can be argued that misunderstanding and poor communications have a common root in the diversity of interest of the multiple groups within an organisation, it is also the case that managers can fail to think in terms of possible misinterpretation of their communications (both content and behaviour) and also can fail to predict accurately probable interpretations due to a lack of knowledge of the context in which others interpret communication content and form. (Varey 1996)

In the context of a company's external positioning these areas of potential dysfunction are important. Based upon the comments below and the fact that the semantic noise level, i.e. the interference with a message brought about by dissonance of meaning caused by social or cultural differences between encoder and decoder, will in visual communications be high, there are opportunities for the decoder to draw arbitrary meanings from every signifier in the picture. I

argue that such dysfunction increases in significance if we address the visual or non-linguistic elements in those artefacts used by companies in their communications activity. The foundations of much training for commercial communication has been historically based upon journalism or at least an ability to write well and clearly. With the exception of those practitioners drawn from television journalism or who worked as picture editors on newspapers (a minority) there is little detailed training of managers or understanding of how pictures 'speak' or transfer meaning.

Balmer (1995) for instance, comments in the Autumn issue of the *Journal of General Management* that on his first encounter with corporate literature, which as he says uses a combination of the written, the visual and page layout, he came "to the conclusion that the area was amorphous and antithetical". He suggests that "ineffective corporate communications may result in key groups holding erroneous and negative perceptions of a corporate brand ... when formal methods of corporate communications are used to convey an inaccurate image ... the results can be catastrophic".

The use of visual means of communication, even within what has been a predominately textual context such as in the broadsheet newspapers, has become an increasingly common occurrence. Even such conservative newspapers as *The Times*, which in the 1950s carried few photographs, would today surprise its readers if there was not at least one photograph on each page. The tabloid newspapers show an equal change from one of linguistic dominance to the current position where the visual has become their primary medium for transmitting meaning. As Kress and van Leeuwen remark (p.30) "It is worth

remembering how recent these changes are. In the early 1970s, the front pages of *The Sun* were still covered in written language, with only a few, small images, a history already forgotten by most readers of *The Sun*." Whereas today, "The reader of *The Sun* is addressed through the medium of the visual (photographs, screamer headlines, colour), with only a small proportion of the page given over to written language." Even in scientific textbooks there has been a marked increase in the use of the visual where "Language has been replaced by the visual as decisively as on the front page of *The Sun*" (Kress and van Leeuwen p.30).

The importance of the visual within textual communication is growing and as commercial brochures are used increasingly as a conduit for corporate policy, the visual can be included within the failures of communication within corporate branding. In fact the importance of the visual is emphasised by many writers. For example Cobb (1988, pp.39-42) quotes from one of the leading corporate identity practitioners, Wally Olins, when he says that "visual changes [referring to graphic design in a company] are massive catalysts for changes of every kind. ... visual symbolism encapsulates and communicates the essential values underpinning the corporate brand ... it is the translation of the corporate culture". Going on to quote Olins again (1988 ,pp.39-42) he writes "the symbol [i.e. the logo] can be a magical way to summarise the idea of an entire corporation". I argue in Chapter IV that the positioning of a corporation within its stakeholder environment is crucial to the success of any company. Yet, as I show later, board directors and managers appear either to brief their communications departments ineffectively on strategic positioning requirements or those departments are themselves unable to articulate the briefing they

receive in visual terms. The result is that the published brochures produced by those departments express inadequately corporate requirements.

Having said there is a growing emphasis on the visual as opposed to the written word, it follows there is a need for systems to be developed to help managers 'read' their visual communications and in doing so adjust if necessary the visual elements. This means they could, if the systems are used correctly, project more closely the meanings required by the board of directors of their company. If Gorb (1978, p.9) was right when he wrote that "the most complex in all design activity is the design of identities", then the development of techniques which could help managers read those designs must be a lacuna waiting to be filled. Baker (1989 pp.275-292) reinforces this view but notes the above point regarding the problems of transferring corporate identity into design, when he says (p.277) that the "literature on graphic design presently offers astonishingly little guidance" and describes in scathing terms some of the graphic terms and explanations for the visual that are used in textbooks and design journals, commenting (p.277) "to excuse this nonsense on the basis that it is intended merely for clients' consumption is to miss the point that there isn't an alternative less inane mode of explanation hidden away somewhere else in the design literature."

There is an acceptance by management that placing all the marketing communications effort behind products and services is no longer enough. Buyers, whether they are business or consumer, want, for different reasons, more information about the companies and firms behind the products they purchase. From the literature there appears to be a realisation that a correlation

exists between effective corporate communications and the wider long term success of companies. If communication at corporate as opposed to product level is to carry the messages required by the board of directors to its public then the communication process itself needs further examination because there are failures in the level of craft skills managers bring to bear on that process (Baker 1989, Balmer 1995, Varey 1996, et al.). The visual (or non-linguistic) elements in the communication process are increasingly important for the reasons Kress and van Leeuwen state in the introduction to their book (1996 p.3), when they say "we believe that visual communication is coming to be less and less the domain of specialists, and more and more crucial in the domains of public communications ... not being 'visually literate' will begin to attract social sanctions. Visual literacy will begin to be a matter of survival, especially in the workplace."

It is likely, therefore, that craft skills often transferred from written journalism as practitioners assume senior appointments within public affairs departments will be dominated by the need for written literacy and as such are unlikely to be effective in visual communications. If new techniques of the genre suggested here can be developed to help managers improve their effectiveness in 'reading' visual communications this could be of assistance to practitioners and the companies who employ them. As commented earlier there is already a significant body of work in the field of social semiotics and critical discourse analysis, (Culler 1997, Silverman 1984, Hodge and Kress 1999, Gee 1999, Fairclough 1998, Coulthard 1997, Fowler 1998, Sarup 1993, et al) much of which is concerned with written texts and more specifically with literary texts (in the artistic sense). There is an opportunity to draw upon such work and where

relevant apply it to visual communications within commercial artefacts. Significant steps have already been made by Kress and van Leeuwen to adapt such concepts intended for use on written texts to the visual. They say, for example, (p.12) that they “seek to develop a descriptive framework that can be used as a tool for visual analysis. Such a tool will have its use for practical as well as critical purposes.” They argue:

critical discourse analysis has mostly been confined to verbal texts, or to verbal parts of texts which also use other semiotic modes to get their message across. We see our book as a contribution to a broadened critical discourse analysis, and we hope our examples will demonstrate its potential for this kind of work. (Introduction p.9)

Kress and van Leeuwen write in the same section (Introduction p.9) that, because critical discourse analysis seeks to show how apparently neutral visual material frequently conveys an idea of neutrality, it is important to focus on a system of visual communications analysis that will convey the underlying ideological attitudes within a picture. It is my objective to make such a translation of purpose. If a systematic approach can be developed by which empirically verifiable analysis of non-linguistic visual texts can be undertaken and the data collected can be separated from its interpretation which by its very nature takes place within a socially contested discourse, I will be creating a tool to help commercial managers understand how the visual can be used to convey status and meaning in social interaction. This enables both creator (signmaker) and viewer to read between the lines, to “glimpse at least the possibility of an

alternative view" (Kress and van Leeuwen p.13).

The inclusion of the visual into many areas of public relations where language was previously the normal mode of expression makes visual communications (non-linguistic 'visual' that is) a suitable theme for critical discourse analysis. It is to meet this desire that I have applied critical discourse analysis (hereafter CDA) to the specific corporate artefact, the company brochure. It would be possible to widen its application (through additional research) to include other corporate artefacts such as advertising, managed televisual editorial comment, graphic systems, logos and the published material used for sponsored events, all of which are currently used to position companies to their publics.

Corporate activity is normally separate from the promotional activity carried out by the marketing function which has as its objective the sale of products and services. Many of the artefacts mentioned earlier such as, inter alia, corporate brochures, annual reports, sponsorship material, financial press releases and presentations to financial analysts are concerned with the development of corporate reputation, which may in itself have a number of separate objectives from those of the marketing function. The phrase 'corporate positioning' as used earlier is understood here to mean that combination of corporate personality (culture) and stance (externally oriented communications activity) that will in the minds of its board of directors establish a position, vis-à-vis its competitors, within its stakeholder universe (Hayes and Watts 1986 pp.160-180). In Chapter IV I expand on the concept and relate it specifically to the theme of this thesis.

By stakeholders I refer to employees, customers, shareholders, suppliers,

representatives of local and national governments, the financial and business community and other influences that impact on the process of achieving company objectives. The techniques developed here have been tested on three consecutive corporate brochures produced by the Rover Group in 1995, 1996 and 1997. There is no significance in the choice of these years nor the choice of the brochures. My aim has been to test the methodologies and in doing so increase the validity of the test by understanding the strategies of the Rover Group of companies in relation to its external positioning at that time and thus how accurately they were expressed in visual terms. Fieldwork to gain that understanding of the Rover corporate communications strategy and its relationship to their external positioning was carried out in the form of interviews with board directors, senior managers and shopfloor workers at manufacturing sites together with attendance at internal meetings.

Many large commercial organisations have no formal document representing their corporate positioning strategy. The Rover Group was no exception. My understanding of their strategy and the overall corporate policy resulting from it had to be obtained by self report through face-to-face interviews of approximately two hours duration with board directors and other senior managers between 29 November 1995 and 30 July 1996. There were twenty-five such semi-structured interviews. In some cases, as with members of the department of corporate affairs, middle and junior executives were also interviewed but in a less structured format in an informal atmosphere. All interviews were against the same core menu of questions but the discussion concentrated, in the case of the corporate affairs department, on the communication processes involved in their day-to-day practice. These latter

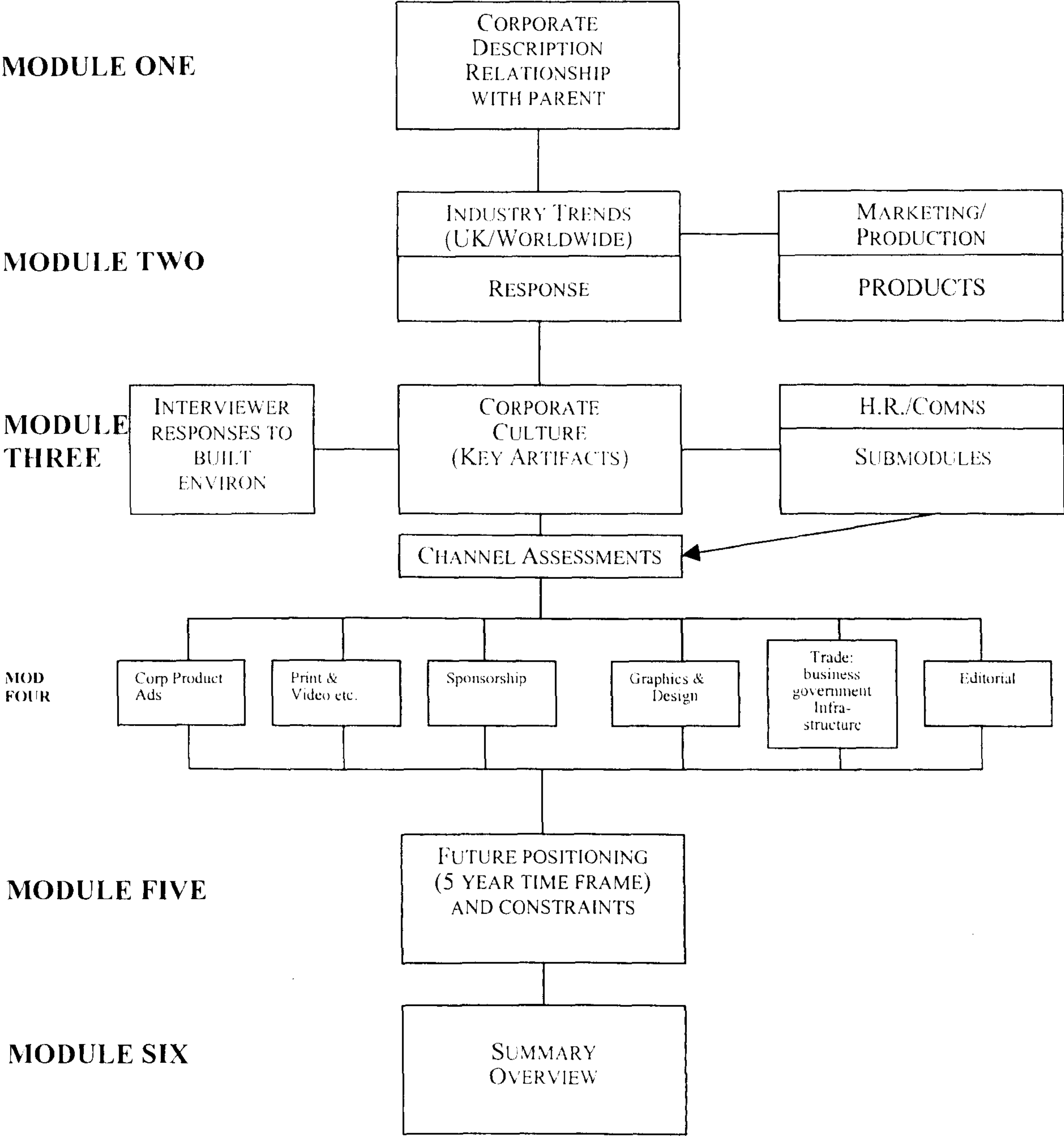
interviews, because they were less structured and more open ended, have not been included directly in the data collected from the twenty-five structured interviews with directors but were used to inform my commentary on the data. In addition there were informal shopfloor discussions on site. These sessions provided insights as to why or how certain policy decisions were taken. Such information informed the articulation and commentary of the Rover corporate positioning statements I later presented to senior managers of the company.

My assessment of the corporate strategy was signed off in 1997 as correct by Bernard Carey, board director responsible for developing the Group's corporate positioning. After acceptance of its accuracy, the results, along with my interpretation of the positioning requirements, were presented to John Towers the then chief executive officer. The meetings with directors Carey and Towers at which they agreed the strategy, were followed by further presentations to senior executives within the department of corporate affairs. Adjustments of the material were made in the interests of a more accurate (or understood by the managers to be more accurate) interpretation. All interviews were against an identical topic menu which was based on the construct shown as Figure One (1) on the following page.

My aim within this chapter has been to set the context within which the later discussion and analysis can take place. I have stressed the increasing significance of corporate communications as an integral part of corporate success in a competitive marketplace, commented upon the low quality of management communications and pointed towards disciplines such as semiotics and literary theory as a source for techniques that could help the commercial practitioner at

ROVER GROUP

AUDIT CONSTRUCT (Core Modules)



corporate level. In Chapter III I describe the data obtained from my interviews with senior managers and the ingredients the board wanted to see expressed in their corporate material. It is these messages that will be assessed as to how effectively they were projected through the conduit of their brochures.

CHAPTER III

ROVER GROUP POSITIONING RESEARCH

Many large commercial organisations have no formal document representing their company positioning strategy. In a study of 1100 UK organisations Varey (1996 p.11) found that “almost half of the organisations represented by participants in this survey do not have a written strategic communications policy”. This was despite the fact that “only 1 in 10 of respondents said that communications management is not part of strategic management” (Varey 1996 p.11). The Rover Group was no exception. My understanding of their strategy and the overall corporate policy resulting from it had to be obtained by face-to-face interviews with board directors and senior managers. All interviews were conducted against an identical topic menu. The menu allowed closed and open-ended questions and was based on the construct shown on the previous page. Questions (see Appendix Exhibit A) were grouped under the modules shown but were used as prompts for open-ended discussion rather than to obtain precisely worded responses which may have been difficult to articulate for managers unaccustomed to conceptual dialogue. Under Module Four emphasis was placed in the questioning on the channels of communication the company was currently using. The intention was to gain the views of respondents as to whether artefacts such as brochures, advertising and editorial material reflected the board's strategy. In order to create a statement of strategy against which to compare visual interpretations, the first three questions to respondents took the following form:

1. How would you describe, in one paragraph, the Rover Group? (This question was intended to relate to those areas which might or might not include products, services and activities in which it was involved, size, geographical spread of operations, broad objectives, driving forces and management philosophy. The headings were not suggested. The objective was to ascertain where the respondent would place their own emphasis in a front of mind response. In fact the question was often couched colloquially in the form of, "If you were at a social gathering and a business guest asked you to describe your company what would you say?")
2. What is the Group's strategy? (although factors such as growth rate, profitability, or international expansion, would be expected, there was no lead in the way the question was asked. The intention was to find if the respondent understood the Group strategy and if so what did they see as the most important, or memorable, elements? Where, in fact, did *they* lay emphasis?)
3. Are there any common beliefs or strategies (a shared "culture") that link together the companies within the Rover Group?

The questions were varied to take account of the respondents' area of responsibility. Senior managers find difficulty in expressing abstract concepts such as vision, culture and long term strategy without resorting to generalised statements. For this reason the same area of questioning was revisited from different perspectives in further questions within the same module. For example,

questions that asked the manager to provide what I term a 'Prioritised SWOT' (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats, each in priority) elicited similar information from questions concerning strategy. The reason why this double banking is imposed is because SWOT lists are a familiar technique used by managers when assessing a situation (Heller 1987, pp.258-259). As such they generate in the manager's mind a seamless opportunity to discuss positioning strategy. Under Modules Two and Three, additional but more detailed questions were asked of the heads of specialist departments such as Personnel and Human Resources, Marketing, and Corporate Communications, on attitudes within their own departments. The questions followed a pattern I have used over many years for corporate positioning studies of this type (Watts 1991, pp.47-52). It is important to explain here this technique to justify its validity. The process differs from market research, where a precise recording is made of each word or phrase in the interview. For my methodology I use the questions, although written, to form the basis of a topic menu (see Appendix Exhibit A) which is verbalised into a colloquial style of address. This overcomes the problems of managerial articulation mentioned above. To strengthen the validity it is necessary to have contact with the company and its culture before undertaking the interviews. This is because senior managers absorb into their speech shorthand forms of verbal expression when discussing management issues. This is sometimes referred to as an idelect (Barthes 1967 p.21). It is a discourse of its own which is more extensive than the phenomenon known by those outside the genre as "jargon". It is closer to a definition of discourse (lower case 'd' in the terminology used by Gee 1999, pp.6-7) as the study of language as it flows rather than a series of units enclosed within sentences. The managers make sense of each other's utterances because they are embedded within a hinterland of assumptions and

expectations about the body of knowledge their corporate culture shares and which become implicitly activated by their semiotic exchange. It is often a way with words or a use of phrases that are commonly found in a wider context, yet within that social semiotic exchange they have a specific meaning which can become the idelect of the company.

An example, is the phrase 'The upfront', which meant, within the international consultancy Burson-Marsteller Ltd., the first set of slides or opening statements in a sales presentation which had become so consistent that within certain combinations were constant in terms of the meaning the company required but were not necessarily constant in format, i.e. visual or linguistic terms. In another company, the television news agency Bulletin International Ltd., where I asked the chief executive officer Anthony Hayward (March 2000) about the type of person they liked to recruit he said they only wanted "up and at 'em people". This meant people capable of driving themselves to make cold sales calls. This was not a phrase created as a response to my question. It was a phrase used throughout the company as part of their idelect and symbolised what could be termed a part of the company discourse. In neither of these cases could the phrases be termed jargon because they were more than replacement phrases alone but a reference to something deeper with wider associations. Varey, refers to this (1999), although he prefers the word jargon as a descriptor, when he says "professions have their own jargon and rules for conduct and reward and punishment". Unfortunately this shorthand as used by individual managers does not always have as precise a meaning as the examples quoted. The result is that recipients interpret the speaker's views differently. Such views are then passed to another group and further variation can occur. As Varey says in the same

article (Varey 1999) "There is a common self-deception that we engage in communication in pursuit of mutual understanding, when we are actually engaged in a concealed strategic action to achieve some other objective (even concealed from ourselves) ... we model communication like a game of football, passing around a ball of so-called information. Yet we just know that we do not experience our communicating like this."

This process of commercial discourse may play a role due to the deceptive elements (Varey 1999) involved in the difficulties managers have in transcribing verbal ideas into visual formats.

The data assembled during my field work was grouped under similar phrases and statements and given headings that summarised the meanings within that group. Those headings were developed into what I term the key positioning dimensions. The chronology was thus:

1. Respondent answers to questions listed and clustered. Where comments relevant to overall strategy and policies were given as answers to later questions or more informal discussions or print material, they too were included.
2. Similar comments were removed and items in the list grouped under the headings:

TOPIC MENU INTERVIEWS

SELECTION OF RELEVANT QUOTES

“We are a diversified player”, “Fast on our feet”, “We challenge boundaries”, “Open and friendly”, “We have created an environment for change”, “There is a distinctiveness in the way we approach customers”, “The culture is about learning and growing”, “Training is not to sheep dip. It carries on throughout working life”, “People must chose to be empowered”, “Openly self critical”, We have our own style of doing things”, “Single status associates”, “The Managers now understand business”, “We want to develop the future British tradition.” Our Designs have flair and quirkiness”, “The heart rules over the head”, “We dare to be different”, “We are the repository of British motor history”, “Our sense of timeless products has almost a moral value”, “Good enough is not enough,” “Performance without strain is in the company as a whole not just its products”, “We have one of the most advanced automotive design and engineering facilities in the world”, “There is an obsessive attention to process detail.”

- General Description and Distinguishing Factors of Group
 - Prioritised Strengths
 - Prioritised Weaknesses
 - Factors that Distinguish Rover Group from parent BMW in terms of perceived (by respondent) culture
3. Quotations were selected from the lists according to whether they embodied a situation or characteristic which differentiated the Rover Group from its competitors as articulated by respondents.

Individual quotations may not differ from those made by competitors in their brochures, advertising, etc. but when they are taken in combination they articulate corporate strategy and provide the differentiation required by the board.

The list of (Figure 2) typical quotations taken from the interviews are shown as an example. Those words or phrases which embody differentiating elements have been underlined as examples of the criteria discussed above. The quotations not underlined such as “diversified”, “attention to process detail” were still important and were examined in combination with specific policy requirements to assess their alignment with Rover corporate strategy and whether they should be seen as the norm for any automotive company aspiring to world class positioning. The respondent statements thus provided designations for submission to management as a fair reflection of the board’s strategic beliefs. The key positioning dimensions were examined by the Group chief executive and the director of corporate communications in a three- hour

meeting at which they confirmed they reflected the Group communication strategy.

The summary of responses thus formed a baseline for the required positioning against which any detailed analysis of the company artefacts could be compared. In the following list of adjectives some headings are descriptors of those parts of the Rover Group culture considered to be important by that particular respondent. In a number of cases, for example, the descriptor emphasised the continuing relevance of the Group's past, which has remained front of mind for many executives. The complex history of the Group is summarised in the Appendix as Exhibit B.

Here follow the descriptive headings which combine into distinctive groups those responses which were verbalised to me under interview and which provided a basis for the Group's external positioning strategy.

a) Britain's Motoring Heritage

The Rover Group see themselves as the repository of Britain's motoring heritage. One reason is because they were at one time the owner of many famous British marques in addition to Rover, MG, Mini and Land Rover which formed their product portfolio at the time of my interviews. The Rover Group at that time also owned historic marques such as Morris, Austin, Riley, Austin-Healey, Alvis, and Triumph. Board level respondents described this ownership, when interviewed, as part of that heritage, a core ingredient of what they considered to be their corporate

communications strategy.

b) People Oriented/Open

Respondents who gave “people orientation” and “openness” as attributes within their own personal understanding of the Group's corporate culture, listed inter alia the following descriptors when asked to define what they meant by “people orientation” and “openness”:

- Friendly
- Forward thinking
- Learning culture
- Individual's contribution, hierarchical titles not important
- Openly self-critical
- Good working conditions with a style and way of doing things
- An involvement culture
- Trying “to work smarter not harder”
- “People must CHOOSE to be empowered”
- Training that carries through life. Try to grow staff through a system of ‘fact holders’
- Single status ‘associates’ with everyone wearing same overalls/uniform.

Many of these responses illustrate the ideolectic element within management discourse discussed earlier. For example, “forward thinking” may not be seen as “people oriented” within the wider public

discourse of political commentary. In fact in the public arena it often implies redundancy. To the staff of Rover, however, within a rapidly changing competitive industry it implied the opposite. Not to be forward thinking meant to them the end of the company. To them “forward thinking” referred to model design, engineering excellence and performance advantages. Hence it is to the respondents a positive attribute.

“Openly self-critical” is a positive attribute for a company that has a history of indifferent management and constant change. The company had been seen by many media commentators as “rudderless”. Mowart-Brown writing of their history (1992) uses phrases such as “bright and fantastic ideas came and went”, “with hindsight, it is difficult to reconcile the resultant British Leyland Motor Corporation with the contemporaneous ‘big is beautiful’ syndrome” (p.26), “the events following the formation of BLMC strike the industrial historian as they did the customer, as being concerned not with products but with corporate politics and lamentable industrial relations, (p28) ... the appointment of Michael Edwardes as chairman of Leyland ... followed a period of what was resembling musical chairs of management!” (p.28), and “for almost two decades after the Leyland take-over, everything the conglomerate touched turned to dust.” (p.31) See Appendix Exhibit B for historical significance of the company names mentioned above.

c) Management Quality

Questioned on their definition of “Quality of Management” as a plus factor in the company positioning, respondents listed:

- Seen by staff as being ‘in touch’
- Approachable
- People who understand business

It should be noted that this question was only put to senior managers!

d) Progressive

Board respondents used the descriptor “progressive” in their description of the Group. When questioned further they said this meant:

- In state of change
- “Fast on our feet”
- Change through osmosis
- “We challenge boundaries”
- “We have an environment for change”

e) Unique Manufacturing Systems

Those who claimed a unique manufacturing system as one of the Group’s attributes had more difficulty in defining their subjective

definition of this term, using phrases such as:

- Process over Product
- Innovative
- “If it looks right it is right”
- “Good enough is not good enough” (quote by CEO John Towers under interview)
- Cars produced by aesthetically able engineers
- “Quality Awards List as proof of our struggle for quality”
- Most advanced engineering and design facility in the UK

f) Products

- “Customers do not buy a car they buy a tradition”
- “Timelessness is almost a moral value”
- Heritage
- Variety
- “Performance without strain”
- Safety

NB: See table (Figure 3) headed “Perceptual Conflicts in Marque Values”. The table was part of a slide presentation I gave to members of the public affairs department as part of a debriefing process. The aim was to take a selection of the results of the interviews and highlight perceptual conflicts identified from the respondent data. It is a summary of marketing marque values then in use by the marketing department as a basis for

discrete marketing communications activity. The summary highlights the perceptual conflicts which can be created by the use of such abstract value systems within a non-holistic framework. The negative effect of such widely defined concepts on any attempt to develop a single coherent communications message at corporate level is obvious.

g) Britishness

The question of Britishness is complex. At the beginning of my research (1995) decisions had already been taken in both the Rover and the BMW (the then owners) Group boards that one characteristic to be stressed throughout Rover's corporate and marque communications was the idea of 'Britishness'. A task force was created and in September 1995, it presented recommendations verbally and by means of written reports. They were couched in marketing terms and aimed to provide a brief for future advertising campaigns. I had access to that unpublished document which examined the positive and negative aspects of Britishness and listed those attributes the directors saw as relevant and how they could be expressed. I draw later on these findings and upon comments made about them by senior managers. Bernd Pischetsrieder, the chief executive officer of the parent company BMW until 1998, expressed his desire in respect to Britishness when he stated to Matthew Carter, a journalist writing in *The Director* magazine (January 1996) that " Rover ... is firmly associated with a specific message [Britishness], which clearly reflects the philosophy of both manufacturer and owner ... it can only be generated as the result of a systematic, ongoing strategy, pursued consistently and

with perseverance.” Pischetsrieder went on to say that cars with no charisma or identity are run-of-the-mill and interchangeable, and that is reflected in the patterns of car buying and car ownership. “Buyers of BMWs or models of the Rover Group not only acquire a car, they participate in a tradition.” (Carter 1996)

Much time has been spent by the company identifying those characteristics of Britishness. A selection of such characteristics included:

- Radical
- Against all odds
- Free thinking
- Complex
- Humorous
- Warm
- Soft
- Strong sense of identity
- Daring to be different
- Passion Integrity
- Exploring spirit
- Tenacity
- Fairness
- Quirkiness and flair
- “Rover aims to be a tradition of the future.”

NB: Because of its importance in the minds of the Rover board a more

PERCEPTUAL CONFLICTS IN MARQUE VALUES?

YOUTHFUL OUTLOOK	ESTABLISHED MIDDLE-CLASS, MIDDLE-AGED
Escapism (Mini) Spirited (Rover) Excitement (Mini) Freedom (Land-Rover) Adventure (Land-Rover) Guts (Land-Rover) Exhilaration (M.G.) Individuality (Land-Rover and Mini) Innovation (Mini) Progressiveness (Rover)	Presence (Rover) Effortlessness (Rover) Pride (Rover) Welcoming (Rover) Authenticity (Land-Rover) Supremacy (Land-Rover) Distinctiveness (M.G.)

detailed discussion on the concept of Britishness has been included at the end of this chapter.

h) Diversified

- An extended enterprise but a niche player
- No adversarial customer/supplier culture.

i) Grasping the Intellectual High Ground

This heading involved respondent replies to questions concerning the issues they believed would face the company over the next five years and which had to be faced and turned into an active ingredient of their corporate policy. The respondents voiced the view that the company should develop a position on the issues listed (Figure 4) which are taken from a presentation to Rover executives who 'voiced' them at the meeting as a part of the overall positioning needs of the Group.

A Summary of the Positioning Ingredients

By grouping the responses under single descriptive headings it was possible to undertake wide-ranging discussion with the Rover corporate affairs director and gain his agreement to an interim list. This was condensed into the following five elements to form the basis for a company strategy. Later some of the elements were refined in the light of the need for greater clarity in terms of group differentiation and ease of

projection within corporate texts. They were:

BRITISHNESS

INTERNATIONAL

DIVERSIFIED

PRODUCT CHARACTERISTICS

DISTINCT CORPORATE PHILOSOPHY

There was an additional subset which said the company must be seen as an important element within the BMW Group.

It was agreed that because of the variety of stakeholders (see next chapter for definition) involved in their communications programme priority should not be given to any one of these elements. **Each factor should have the same prominence when articulated in corporate material.**

We should pause here to discuss the issue of what defined BRITISHNESS as an idea held by Rover's senior management. It is a complex area but without an understanding of what Rover managers meant by it there would be difficulty in comparing this image dimension with the meanings that were connoted within the Rover brochures. It should be stated that in addition to the 25 interviews with board directors and senior managers I also attended presentations, seminars and two-way discussions on the Britishness theme with Rover middle managers. Data from such presentations and from the interviews, helped me compile the following

groupings that were seen to express the concept.

Group A:

- Against all odds
- Heart over head
- Free Thinking
- Daring to be different
- Exploring spirit

Group B:

- Humorous
- Warm (also welcoming)
- Soft
- Passion
- Quirkiness
- Flair

Group C:

- Integrity
- Tenacity
- Fairness
- Energetic (to include corporate citizenship)
- Honest

- Breeding

From these three groups the ingredients of Britishness as applied to Rover's strategy were interpreted and finally agreed by the relevant directors as:

MOTOR HERITAGE

INTEGRITY

EXPLORING SPIRIT

AGAINST ALL ODDS

HUMOUR

QUIRKINESS AND FLAIR

How these characteristics were interpreted as part of an expression of company strategy are discussed later as part of the analysis of individual artefacts.

It is helpful at this point to consider how Rover senior management perceived their culture. This too formed part of the underpinning to the overall positioning dimensions. It is my experience in carrying out similar fieldwork that senior managers in commercial organisations tend to describe their company culture in preferred rather than actual terms. The exceptions are companies in an acute stage of change following a take-over or merger with its consequent appointment of new executives at the top who very quickly express their own views on the subject. The Rover Group is no exception and it was less easy to summarise directors'

attitudes towards Group culture than it was for the other headings discussed. Respondent answers on this subject along with the informal comments from human resource managers, ranged widely. Their comments were collated and summarised under four headings signed off by the chief executive officer and the director of corporate communications. They were:

- Quality Systems
- A People Culture
- A Strong Customer Interface
- Progressive Attitudes by Decision-making Staff

Each is here briefly discussed.

Quality Systems:

A number of elements were listed and grouped under umbrella titles they hoped would encapsulate concepts that would energise the staff. The board of director's policy on quality systems is expressed in 'The Rover of Tomorrow' programme, the key points of which were:

- Total flexibility in working practice and between jobs
- Single status
- Improvements to working environment
- Training opportunities for ALL staff

TOPIC MENU INTERVIEWS

INTELLECTUAL HIGH GROUND –RESPONDENTS CONSIDER FOLLOWING ISSUES TO BE FACED

- i) Cars will be made differently – this means more strategic alliances and joint ventures which means corporate reputation is increasingly important.
- ii) There will be changed public attitudes to: personal transport with more leasing, environmental concerns, new leisure and work life-styles”
- iii) So socio-geo-political changes will affect travel, energy systems, IT, health, fashion and design
- iv) An increasing conflict between public desire to travel with political restrictions resulting from greater environmental awareness.
- v) People hate cars (and auto industry) but not their own.
- v) Consumers in market research say they want safety, lower prices, fuel efficiency and less pollution over the next five years.

- Security of employment for all who wish it (in return there must be total commitment to the continuous improvement of processes)
- “Everyone has two jobs - their job and the job of improving it”

In addition to the ‘Rover of Tomorrow’ programme respondents identified the following success factors in their business processes:

1. Product Improvement
2. New Product Introduction
3. Logistics
4. Sales and Distribution services
5. Manufacturing quality
6. Maintenance
7. Business Planning
8. Corporate learning, termed The Learning Process¹
9. Management of people.

A People Oriented Culture:

Respondents stated the people culture hinged around ‘The Rover of

¹The Learning Process is seen as one of the fundamental concepts which underpins their culture. Through these processes and the attitudes they engender the business unifies, acquires, disseminates and shares information. It informed the corporate image dimension discussed later which included the words ‘Ascension of the Intellectual High Ground’.

Tomorrow' project and summed up the critical success factors for Rover in the following quotations:

"To create a culture that embraced purpose, dignity for employees, recognition, and an environment of trust and security"

"To help the leaders lead through empowerment and support"

"To achieve world class resourcing standards"

"To create continuous learning"

"To ensure the whole company has a wide understanding of the compelling business needs by means of an ongoing dialogue"

"To empower both individuals and teams"

"To foster positive involvement relationships"

The people orientation is included within the final positioning ingredients signed off by the chief executive yet, as will be seen, received small attention within the visual embodiment of the positioning strategy in the brochures.

Customer Orientation

The Rover of Tomorrow project was seen as leading to a more customer oriented climate which was reinforced by what they termed "Progressive Attitudes" (see below).

Progressive Attitudes

Under this heading, which included 'challenging boundaries', 'advanced design and engineering facilities,' removal of a traditional 'function structured organisation', they set seven elements:

1. An attempt to create a realisation by staff that they hold their future and the future of their colleagues in their own hands
2. An encouragement to absorb information, self-assess and benchmark progress
3. Staff are to be helped to seek out their own role models
4. Individuals encouraged to admit their weaknesses so there is only one way to go - up
5. Belief in a momentum that comes from pulling in one direction and knowing they have approval from the top
6. Managers directed to listen to the workforce, involve them, nurture their enthusiasm and reward their suggestions
7. A desire for each individual to know their place in the supply chain yet not forget the debt they owe to the smallest link in that chain.

One respondent emphasised that the company approach to its culture was “holistic”, a word which appears in the final positioning statement.

Summary of Rover Positioning Analysis

A presentation based upon the interviews with senior managers and informed by wider discussion at middle management and factory floor level was presented to the chief executive, John Towers, and the director of corporate communications, Bernard Carey. They signed off my interpretation as correct and agreed the Group's positioning should be concerned with the following ingredients:

- Britishness (definition above)
- International outlook
- The development and achievement of holistic management skills and the creation of a culture that involves people, customers, responsiveness, quality and emphasis on processes.
- Products that embody the company heritage
- Ascension of the intellectual high ground

Bearing in mind these image dimensions were signed off as correct by the chief executive officer and the director of corporate communications we must for the purpose of this research assume they are an accurate reflection of boardroom policy and constitute the message ingredients required by senior management to be included within the Group communication programme. I return to these ingredients later when the

methodology has been developed but before doing so it is important to consider the concept of corporate positioning and why it is important within the terms of a company's business success. Positioning is concerned with the strategic position the company attempts to own within its stakeholder universe. For this reason I have developed a discussion around its implications in Chapter IV.

This chapter, however, has been concerned with the establishment of the ingredients the Rover Group wanted to see as the basis of its corporate communications. It is the criterion against which the effectiveness of the publishers (signmakers) in articulating those meanings in printed visual format has been measured. Although my research only involves this one company or group of companies at one point in time, there are wider implications and lessons to be drawn which may have implications for other companies, i.e. general rules that could be extrapolated. In the following chapter I examine the concept of corporate positioning and why its importance to management has expanded.

CHAPTER IV

CORPORATE POSITIONING, DEFINITION AND FUNCTION

Unlike printed material developed as a support for the marketing function, corporate publications form part of a wider purpose. This purpose is, *inter alia*, the creation of a consistent positioning for a company among its publics. Before discussing the methodology needed to analyse how meaning may be produced and transferred within corporate literature (Chapter V) it is perhaps necessary to describe what is meant by corporate positioning as a management technique.

During the marketing process images are created in the mind of the consumer that are reinforced by slogans which strengthen the relationship between buyer and brand. Hart (1995) postulates that “a customer does not buy a product but rather a product performance, or more to the point, a satisfaction”. The objective is to generate repeat purchases. The branding concept as applied to products and the manner in which such concepts have changed during the last decade is relevant to our discussion on corporate positioning. The emphasis of strategic communications at corporate level in the past tended to be concerned with how a company was positioned in the financial market and thus projected to the stock exchange.

Corporate positioning is sometimes referred to as ‘corporate branding’ (Olins 1995, Kapferer 1997, Laforet and Saunders 1994) but this differs from positioning because it refers primarily to the role of the corporate image in relation to the sale of its products. It can also encompass (de Charnatony 1998)

the role of staff interaction in the process, although such a discrete definition differs from the wider approach to positioning outlined in this section.

The words 'positioning' and 'branding' in relation to a corporation tend to be used interchangeably by marketing and communications professionals. As it is central to this research, it is important to appreciate in some detail the theory of corporate positioning. To do this it is necessary first to discuss how the concepts of branding have evolved. Such beliefs as applied to product branding are now becoming part of the process for developing a corporate positioning strategy and the activity programme to project that message.

The classic and accepted definition of product branding was published in 1960 by the American Marketing Association (AMA 1960 *Marketing Definitions: a glossary of marketing terms*. Chicago American Marketing Association) as:

A brand is a distinguishing name and/or symbol (such as a logo, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers, and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors.
(AMA 1960)

The above was written from the perspective of the manufacturer (note use of verb 'intended'). It followed the supply driven economic attitudes of the time. The economist domination of the market research industry tended towards a rationalist approach which, in the words of Hanby (1999):

... had significant influence ... most notably as the philosophical justification for the belief that people know why they do things (e.g. buy brands) and that, if you ask them questions about their behaviours, intentions and attitudes, they can give you comprehensive, accurate and unambiguous answers ... it regards the brand as having no life of its own but rather as an inert entity to which things are done ... however, by the early 1980s the world was clearly changing. Positivism and objectivism were under attack on many fronts. Relativism and in particular, postmodernism with its focus on the multiple realities of the experiential world, was emerging as a new intellectual paradigm.

Hanby (1999) goes on to say, quoting the views of Stephen King of J Walter Thompson, the advertising agency, "that brands were not just product adjuncts but complex cognitive entities created by consumers in reaction to their total set of experiences with a product."

Hanby (1999) extends this approach, which forms a fundamental underpinning to many of the entities that structure and represent the sorts of lives people lead; he quotes Lannon and Cooper (1983, pp.195-123) saying:

What turns a product into a brand is that the physical product is combined with something else ... symbols, images, feelings ... to produce an idea which is more than the sum of the parts. The two, products and their symbolism, live and grow with and on one another as a partnership of mutual exchange.

These changes in attitude towards the concept of branding have been carried over more recently into the wider area of corporate communications, i.e. to the company which manufactures and sells the products. Such techniques have been expanded and broadened to embrace target groups other than, but including, the purchasing customer. The total process being referred to as 'corporate positioning'.

This concept is described by Hayes and Watts (1986 p.173) as a situation whereby:

... a company has a personality (its culture), and identity (the external clothing embodied in permanent appurtenances such as graphics, buildings and product packaging), and it leaves behind an image in people's minds, ... it becomes obvious that the position taken ... is like a stance. It is a way of being seen that ensures onlookers will not muddle a particular company with any other. We talk about owning a position.

Fombrun (1995) sees corporate reputation or positioning as a collective assessment of a firm's past behaviour that depicts that firm's ability to achieve results for its various stakeholders. In fact there has been growing debate in the City of London and the financial community about this area which they refer to as "intangible assets" (Freeman 2001). Research by Brand Finance in their fifth *Annual Survey of City Analysts* is quoted by Freeman (2001) when he says that:

crucially, perhaps 68 per cent of respondents said they wanted more information on 'intangible assets', that part of the company's market valuation not accounted for by hard goods, more commonly known to the business world as 'goodwill' and part of which is understood by corporate communicators to be 'reputation'.

Such is its growing importance that Freeman refers to US business analyst Baruch Lev, who estimates that 80 per cent of US companies' value is tied up in intangible assets. Further research quoted by Freeman (2001), carried out by consultants Hill and Knowlton suggests "corporate reputation is universally acknowledged to play a major role in achieving strategic business objectives, but chief executives fail to measure or manage it adequately". This last phrase concerning the adequacy, or lack of it, of management in their handling of reputation supports the need for my research into techniques which can help managers communicate meaning more effectively through visual channels. Positioning or reputation, can be articulated by the appurtenances or artefacts mentioned earlier into a positioning statement which reflects the long-term strategic policy of a company. Such statements have been described by Watts (1989, pp.1-2, and 1991, pp.48-49) as consisting of:

- i) A description of the products on offer by the organisation
- ii) The markets to which it sells
- iii) The philosophy and strategy that drives the company

But the all-enveloping role of positioning must be emphasised. In the fifth Sam Epelle Memorial Gold Paper Lecture (see Appendix Exhibit C) I make the point that:

The bedrock of so much work ... is something we call 'positioning'. It is a difficult word to explain. It is not a slogan ... nor should a positioning run to more than the proverbial one side of A4 paper ... it is the encapsulation of what the company is about in one or two paragraphs ... it is the essence of what you are about and what makes you so different that staff want to work for your organisation, customers want to deal with you, financial institutions want to lend you money, local committees want you in their midst and governments want to help you and listen to your point of view. (Watts 1992)

If managers are to bring a company to life in the eyes of its staff and external audiences and give it sufficient personality to project a more powerful positioning than would be the case from advertising and promotional activity alone, it requires the use of additional techniques to those normally used by managers on a day-to-day basis. It is normal for the board of directors of a company, having decided, *inter alia*, that their corporate positioning needs to be communicated to stake holders (customers, government, staff, the financial and business community, the local publics which feed its factories), to employ a range of techniques and artefacts to project their message. It is during this process, I submit, that meanings articulated by the board of directors are changed (Freeman 2001), usually unconsciously and often as a result of the culture which exists within the company.

It is not my intention to discuss the impact of internal culture on the decision-making process involved in the production of corporate print material,

although I note (Varey 1996, Balmer 1995) that business writers in the communications field comment on the difficulties that boards of directors have in achieving an accurate articulation of their corporate strategy to outside audiences. Hence the need I postulate for analytical methods suitable for application by executives to the printed artefacts used in the positioning process.

Research by Peter Rowe Associates (The Corporate Report 1996) for example, dealt with one such artefact, the company report, maintaining that although it was "the company's single most important communications method for reaching investors", when it came to the Chairman's Report, a core element within the publication, "there is clearly a problem with this (section) input in many companies' reports ... clichés at this level are still found in many annual reports and this is not what shareholders expect to hear."

I accept that because of different agendas journalists, institutional analysts and potential take-over predators, will not always share the views of the company advanced by senior managers. As a result there can be difficulty in the decoding process among certain target audiences. A lacuna does exist, however, between the board of directors' preferred strategic message and the corporate artefacts which find their way onto the desks of end target audiences. It appears to continue with the use of visual or pictorial communication. One such example is the use of photographs. The photographer Jules Pipe, a specialist in the area of corporate brochures, says (*Daily Mail*, 25 January 1996) that "business people will often put no effort into their shots and have no idea how they should look". Judi James, an Associate Adviser to the Industrial Society says (1996) that many corporate "portrait shots exude all the charm of a passport photo or police

mugshot and, used in a brochure, your manic stare is guaranteed to instil a feeling of unease in potential clients, however flowery and reassuring the prose that accompanies it ... these pictures might have passed muster in the seventies or eighties but in the snap-happy nineties they look corny and posed."

It is important at a time when greater transparency is demanded by government watchdogs and public alike (Hertz 2001), to understand the underlying codes reflected in print material, especially pictorially, in corporate brochures. Policy and boardroom decision-making frequently takes little account of the impact of their discussion on communications artefacts which they assume will carry inviolate the board's strategic positioning message to the 'outside world' in such a way that their message is decoded exactly as intended. Tactical criteria such as profits, product production, market and environmental changes and organisational structure frequently take precedence on boardroom agendas. The impact of policy making on corporate artefacts and the reverse impact of those artefacts on corporate thinking has been discussed (Watts 1977, pp.25-39) in terms of how board directors, whose time is spent primarily on short-term tactical decision making, need help when invited by external organisations to consider strategic issues for media interviews, platform speeches, interviews by academics, management and communications consultants or advertising agencies. They turn to their corporate brochures, their company advertisements, and earlier speeches by colleagues, to inform their utterances. In the process, their own strategic views can be altered and redefined by those artefacts and texts. Over time, corporate artefacts become carriers of meaning in themselves and cease to differentiate between the original instructions at the time of production with later changes which occur within the company's own

environment. The style and format of the artefact can, by implication, make comments about the organisation's culture and philosophy of management that was not necessarily intended by the board of directors nor by the public affairs department who prepared the document. Meaning thus passes from the management decision-maker to staff and outside audiences by means of artefacts which themselves alter and redefine those meanings. The board of directors become part of an artifactual relationship which generates its own cultural norm and through that participates in an organisation's strategic positioning.

In this chapter I have dwelt upon the concept of corporate positioning within the context of how companies are increasing their emphasis on communications at a corporate as opposed to a marketing or product level. I have stressed the growing importance of corporate publications and why managers need help in the analysis of these publications to ascertain whether the best use is being made of their print media as conduits of meaning to outside audiences.

Before considering in more detail visual techniques within the context of the matrix of corporate communications and how such methodologies can be made available to executives, it is important to summarise the theories of semiotics and critical discourse analysis that could be made available if they were developed and transferred to the commercial sphere. For this reason the following Chapter V discusses the theories of selected writers in the semiotic field and selects concepts which appear to have informed the work of Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) which itself has had a significant influence on this work.

CHAPTER V

SEMIOTICS AND DISCOURSE: ITS RELEVANCE TO SOCIAL SEMIOTIC THEORY AND CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

In this chapter I summarise the general concepts of semiotics and post-structuralism from which Kress and van Leeuwen developed their approach to visual communications and show how social semiotics and critical discourse analysis form a praxis for their application by means of the templates I have developed here. The concepts of social semiotics and critical discourse analysis stem from the writings of the 19th and 20th-century structuralist, post-structuralist and de-constructionist schools. The origin of the term 'semiology' derives from the posthumous publication of the work of Ferdinand de Saussure where he states:

A science that studies the life of signs within society is conceivable; it would be part of social psychology and consequently of general psychology: I shall call it semiology (from the Greek *semion* 'sign'). Semiology would show what constitutes signs, what laws govern them.

(Ferdinand de Saussure, *General Course in Linguistics*, trans. to English 1973 p.16.)

Saussure (1973) attempted to explain the processes by which meaning was possible through language, stressing signs were composed of signifiers and signifieds that were connected arbitrarily. He argued they were connected through conventions which had to be accepted first by the reader. These

conventions, thus, were social. He considered language, too, was a social system and to communicate we must acquire and understand the social system. This indicates that in part, meaningful communication arises from the relationships between elements in the system of language, some elements of which are more fixed than others. Although later I move away from certain elements of Saussure's thinking we can see here an acceptance of the importance of social factors in the understanding of the meanings which lie beneath the surface of language and by extension I would argue by visual language also. There are dangers, however, in accepting such an hypothesis *in toto* because it emphasises the system as everything rather than as a structure in a state of change. However for the sake of completeness and to assist in the understanding of the social semiotic theories propounded by Kress and van Leeuwen I summarise below elements of the writings of members of the structuralist, poststructuralist and de-constructionist schools of philosophy which form, *inter alia*, the foundation upon which many of the Kress and van Leeuwen theories discussed in the next chapter are drawn:

1. Structuralism

Structuralism can be defined as a belief that texts should be analysed as a system of relationships rather than discrete entities. If language is seen as a system of arbitrary signs as stated above, it means there is no intrinsic link between the signifier and signified if context is everything.

Cobley (1998, p.14) quotes from Saussure:

The only reason that the signifier does entail the signified is because there is a conventional relationship at play. Agreed rules govern the relationship (and these are in action in any speech community). But if the sign does not contain a 'natural' relationship which signifies, then how is it that signs function? For Saussure, the sign signifies by virtue of its difference from other signs. And it is this difference which gives rise to the possibility of a speech community. Language is not complete in any speaker, it exists perfectly only within a collectivity.

The structuralist is thus concerned with the unconscious infrastructure below conscious communication. What is termed the episteme, (from epistemology, the branch of philosophy concerned with how knowledge is derived) is an historical *a priori* to what is there. As commented earlier regarding contextuality, terms or statements are not independent but exist in a relationship with other terms. The system thus becomes everything and consists of a series of layers (later I refer to a first and second order of meaning that can be used as a practical analytical tool within the methodology I developed) which make up an underlying discourse that limits and defines meaning. In effect, structuralism is about a system of diagnosis and as such by identifying the structure within the text, the meaning is determined. Meaning (Sarup 1993, pp.2, 9, 10, 33, Hutchinson 1995, p.341, O'Sullivan, et al, p.174, Powell 1997, p.43) depends upon codes produced by prior discourse (see later in this section)

of a culture. The structuralist will then attempt to analyse the reader's role in producing meaning.

In summary, structuralism is about:

Systems

Relationships

The underlying discourse of knowledge

2. Poststructuralism

For the poststructuralist (Sarup1993, p.3, Culler1997, p.126) the signifier takes on a more dominant role. Truth comes from the interaction of reader and text. There is a rejection of the concept of a fundamental structure in language or of cultural systems that provide meaning. By drawing heavily on metaphor and metonym the poststructuralist emphasises the psychological ingredient, the role of emotion and pleasure in the reader, or in fact, the viewer, in regulating meaning. They are thus concerned with the external structures of social process, class, gender, and historical change. The driver of the car wears dark glasses and in doing so the glasses become a metonym or, almost a synecdoche because dark glasses have attained that level of symbolism, for the excitement and pleasure of the 'good life'. Content becomes important as distinct from the subject. By content they refer to the meaning which shows through a work, i.e. national attitudes, socio-economic groups, etc.

In summary they are concerned that:

There can be no objective description of the whole.

Meaning comes from interaction with the reader.

Psychological responses are relevant to the analysis.

3. **Deconstructionism**

The deconstructionists (Derrida 1978, Sarup 1998, Norris 1987, Johnson 1997) have taken such theories to the conclusion that words and things can never become one, total meaning is impossible. This is a view that becomes especially relevant as I examine visual artefacts used for the transference of meaning from the boardroom to external viewers. For this school of thought the signifiers and signifieds are constantly breaking apart and reattaching in new combinations. If signs refer to what is absent, meaning is absent. Meaning is constantly moving along a chain of signifiers. We cannot ever be precise because the signifier is always changing. In fact, the deconstructionist would argue that in every sign there are traces of other words which that sign has excluded in order to be itself. Thus all signs contain traces of what went before. Meaning is never the same from context to context due to what Derrida (1978) refers to as 'semantic slippage' (Sarup 1993, chap 2, for fuller description of this concept). In summary the deconstructionist is concerned to:

- Look for and note semantic slippage.

- Identify traces (of what went before).
- Accept that words and things can never be one.
- There can be no fixity of meaning.

To restate the core strands: structuralism sees truth as being within the system of the text while poststructuralism stresses the interaction of reader and text. This factor assumes greater significance as I develop a template for commercial use and argue that reading loses its status as a passive consumer of a text to become performance. This interactive approach to the transfer of meaning is important as an analytical system for application to commercial texts. There is, however, further relevance within the post-structuralist position, as Madan Sarup (Sarup 1993, p.3) says that they (the post-structuralists) are "highly critical of the concept of a unity of the stable sign ... " I would argue that the viewer/signmaker's interaction within corporate texts is one of power reciprocating as each takes a superordinate position as a result on the one hand of the ultimate purchasing power of the purse. Yet the potential purchaser still needs information and a sense of security for his/her purchase which can derive from the written material produced by manufacturers. It is necessary at this point to consider the role of the maker of the signs.

It is my intention to select concepts which may contribute to an understanding of commercial visual communication and in doing so consider the context within which the signs were created and what influences may have caused the creator to choose from a range of

possibilities. However, unlike Kress and van Leeuwen (pp.8, 9, 11, 12) my focus is less with the process of sign-making than with its result, although sign-making in a commercial context is likely to take place within a managerial group where individual members have varying levels and types of skill and, of course, seniority. This can affect the superordinate and subordinate relationship involved in the choices. In a later section I develop a table of the possibilities available within the corporate communications genre of sign-making and meaning delivery and what effect it would have on the viewer if alternative choices had been made in terms of signifiers in the particular cases under examination. Nevertheless we must note the comments of Umberto Eco (1972) who has studied this subject in relation to television. He argues (1972 pp.103-121) that "aberrant decoding ... is the rule in the mass media" because people bring different codes to a given message and therefore interpret it in different ways. Berger deals with the same point in relation to the media generally when he writes (Berger 1991, p.24):

The transmitters of messages, because of their social class, educational level, political ideologies, world view, ethos, and so on, do not share the same codes as their audiences, who differ from the message transmitters in some or even most of the above respects and who interpret the messages they receive from their own perspectives.

This range of possibilities is what Sebeok (1991, p.28) refers to in a somewhat prolix statement as "an homology of spatiotemporal transition

probabilities". From such probabilities the criterial aspects of the picture emerge and help us understand more accurately the meaning which derives either intentionally or unintentionally from that choice. The choices made from the probabilities are, at that moment, the most apt representation the sign-maker wishes to express through that semiotic mode. The sign is thus not a pre-existing conjunction of signifier and signified, which is what the structuralist thinkers argue, but a process by which the signifier and the signified exist independently of each other. Kress and van Leeuwen (pp.6-7) argue that signs are motivated by the sign-maker creating a coming together of form, the signifier and meaning, which becomes the signified. The Kress and van Leeuwen thesis (p.7) moves away from the usually accepted intrinsic relationship that is frequently stated in the works of earlier semiologists, of classifying all signs as either being icons, indexes or symbols each with a predefined set of meanings. As such the icon is viewed by the traditional semiologists as solely a meaning where a signifier/signified relationship is based on a resemblance rather than an analogy. The index is one in which there is a causal relationship and the third, the symbol, is related to sign production as it rests on convention which makes it arbitrary.

I have not discarded this classification but I do claim the relationships are more likely to be motivated by the choices and socio-cultural backgrounds of the sign-makers and the context within which they are working. My concern, therefore, has been to develop systems for making judgements on the final results of the sign-maker's work in relation to the requirements of the instructing board of the company. This leads to a

consideration of 'social semiotics' and critical discourse analysis, theories that will inform my later analysis. Social semiotics draws extensively on the terms and concepts discussed above in relation to mainstream semiotics but as the name suggests it lays emphasis on the social and cultural influences behind the signification. The natural extension of elements of semiotics into social semiotics has been well stated by Hodge and Kress:

1. Semiotics is the general study of semiosis, that is, the processes and effects of the production and reproduction, reception and circulation of meaning in all forms, used in all kinds of agents of communications.
- 1.2 Social semiotics is primarily concerned with human semiosis as an inherently social phenomenon in its sources, functions, contexts and effects. It is also concerned with the social meanings constructed through the full range of semiotic forms, through semiotic texts and semiotic practices, in all kinds of human society at all periods of human history. (Hodge and Kress 1988, p.261)

Hodge and Kress (1988, pp.13-14) argue there is no clearly stated definition of semiotics in its traditional form. We should not discard the past, if that was possible, which in any social activity it is not, "in practice the 'tradition' of traditional semiotics is not monolithic or even an agreed body of theories and concepts, and it by no means repudiates the social dimension unequivocally." (Hodge and Kress 1988, p.13). It is not my

intention to discuss the full range of social semiotic concepts, many are irrelevant to this discussion, but those which bear upon visual analysis are considered at relevant points in the text. Kress and van Leeuwen (p.264) take the view that we should avoid the pretence of creating from abstract semiotic concepts any general theory or rule. They are clear, however, in their basic definition stated above and repeated later in their work (p.264). It is important that I too stress the point because in the development of templates which structure many of the semiotic concepts used here it may give the appearance of creating generalised theory. This is not the case. The templates have been developed solely as an aid to the process of analysis, particularly for managers who lack training in semiotic theory.

Social semiotics is an attempt to describe and understand how people produce and communicate meaning in specific social settings, whether they are discrete situations at home or with the family, or settings in which sign-making is well institutionalised and hemmed in by habits, conventions and rules. Social semiotics as sign-making in society is so varied an activity with so many psychological overtones that any attempt to capture it in general theory is likely to fail. As support for my application of social semiotics to the visual process it is necessary to consider the concept of 'discourse' and in doing so explain how theories of discourse have been developed and conflated into critical discourse analysis. This is relevant and applicable to the day to day practice of professional communicators. It helps them disengage the hard factual data of 'what is there' in the picture (i.e. a car, a driver, the countryside,

etc.) from the interpretation of that data. Hopefully it will help reduce the subjectivity caused by the communication analyst's own social and corporate cultural background.

Discourse analysis is defined in *The Icon Critical Dictionary of Post-Modern Thought* (Sim 1999, p.231.) as:

The study of the use of language as it flows or unfolds, as opposed to the rather atomistic sentence-based focus of stylists or traditional linguistics ... speakers make sense of utterances because they are embedded within a hinterland of assumptions and expectations about what speech is and how it functions. Every community shares a body of knowledge which is implicitly activated by any one semantic exchange. This body of knowledge shapes the norms of intelligibility which will determine whether or not a statement is perceived as true, clear or relevant.

Gunther Kress expands on this definition when he says:

Discourses are systematically organised sets of statements which give expression to the meanings and values of an institution. Beyond that, they define and delimit what it is possible to say and not possible to say ... with respect to the area of concern of that institution, whether marginally or centrally. A discourse provides a set of possible statements about a given area, and organises and gives structure to the manner in which a particular topic, object,

process is to be talked about. In that it provides descriptions, rules, permissions and prohibitions of social and individual actions (Kress 1985, pp.6-7).

In creating such sets of rules it means that specialist fields especially in the commercial world of marketing, sales promotion and public relations, will generate their own discourse and create a power dominance which flows both ways during the sign-maker/viewer relationship. Writers such as Gee (1999, pp.6-8) go further. Gee creates a distinction between discourse (lower case 'd,') which applies to linguistic discourse, and Discourse (upper case 'D') which includes all those factors such as the body, clothes, gestures, actions, interactions, symbols, values, attitudes, emotions which at the right place and at the right time constitute the intercommunication of continuous and developing meaning between humans within a discrete context. Gee argues (1999, p.7) that humans are particularly adept at melding all these linguistic and non linguistic factors together, often with the result that we become members of a number of different discourses which often themselves influence each other in positive and negative ways, producing what he calls their own 'hybrids' (p.7). Gee sums it up by saying that Discourse (caps 'D') is the:

different ways in which we humans integrate language and non-language "stuff", such as different ways of thinking, acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, believing, and using symbols, tools and objects in the right places at the right times so as to enact and recognise different identities and activities, give the material world

certain meanings, distribute social goods in a certain way, make certain meaningful connections in our experience, and privilege certain symbol systems and ways of knowing over others. (Gee 1999, p.13)

It will be seen that this area of inclusion matches many of the elements described earlier that make up a corporate positioning in terms of its communication with the outside world. I see the relevance of the concept of discourse (henceforth I will mean Discourse with an upper case 'D' whenever I refer to the word 'discourse', with or without a caps 'D') to the theme of this work, especially when Gee comments:

Discourses are always embedded in a medley of social institutions, and often involve various 'props' like books and magazines of various sorts ... In the end a Discourse is a "dance" that exists in the abstract as a co-ordinated pattern of words, deeds, values, beliefs, symbols, tools, objects, times, and places and in the here and now as a performance that is recognisable as just such a co-ordination. Like a dance, the performance here and now is never exactly the same. (Gee 1999, p.18)

In commercial literature there are fewer well-defined boundaries to discourse because new ones are constantly being created, old ones changed and boundaries forced outwards by professional communicators, especially in the field of advertising where there are attempts on a continuing basis to create new techniques for persuasion.

As Gee (1999) talks of the cultural models underlying discourse in general, making the point (Gee 1999, p.81) that they (the ingredients both conscious and unconscious) “are usually not completely stored in any one person's head. Rather, they are distributed across the different sorts of ‘expertise’ and viewpoints found in the group (Hutchins 1995, Shore 1996), much like a plot to a story or pieces of a puzzle that different people have different bits of and which they can potentially share in order to mutually develop the ‘big picture’”. This same configuration takes place within corporate discourse which also contains the socially based inputs discussed by Gee (1999, pp.82-88) along with company ingredients that are frequently more tightly controlled because they are unidirectional and informed by senior management who maintain a power position over subordinates. In addition the process is informed by the wider cohort of professional qualifications or interests within which the employees move, i.e. the world of accountancy, marketing, public affairs and other discrete skills maintained within a discourse which is based around the requirements of their membership of professional institutions. Gee likens the non-commercial discourse to a giant map:

Each Discourse is represented on the map like a country, but with movable boundaries that you can slide around a bit. You place the map on top of any language, action, or interaction you participate in or want to think about. You move the boundaries of the Discourse areas on the map around in negotiation with others or

as your reflections change.. The map gives you a way to understand what you are seeing in relationship to the full set of Discourses in an institution ... or the society as a whole ... Such a map is a Discourse grid against which you understand your own and others' thought, language, action, and interaction. It is an ever changing map with which you can engage in recognition work. It is, as it exists across people and social groups, both the origin and the product of the reality of actual Discourses in the world, aligning and disaligning themselves with each other through history. (Gee 1999, p.22)

This map in commercial terms will include, inter alia, some of the ingredients above such as the internal culture of the organisation, the shorter term policies and views expressed through internal 'house magazines', seminars, conferences and departmental briefings which purport to represent the views of management. Of equal importance is the cohort effect which frequently causes conflation from what is termed 'secondary opinion-forming groups' (Watts1970, pp.20-25, Watts1997, pp.19-21). These groups of people through their organisations generate their own externally sourced influences which work on staff within a company because of the specialist training or qualifications they, the staff, receive or are receiving as members of discrete areas of specialisation. In some cases that influence is highly structured as in the case of accountants, lawyers and executives with business degrees. In other cases it is more informal and takes place through the group effect of seminars, short-term courses, external offices held in local branches of

professional bodies, et al. As a result of this and pressures from within the employees, social and domestic group there can be an extension even of Gee's map through the effect of what are termed opinion-forming 'reference groups' (Watts 1970 pp.20-25 and Watts 1997, pp.19-21) that are overlooked by the analyst because as the name implies they describe those opinion-forming groups to which the manager 'refers' for the significant influences within their lives. To apply discourse analysis to the visual, however, and in particular to the commercial visual, we must look more widely in our consideration of socio-cultural influence, wider in fact than the aesthetic rules normally applied to visual analysis. This means to work towards what Kress and van Leeuwen call in the subtitle of their book, (1996) a "visual grammar". This should not be an attempt to translate grammatical terms such as nouns, verbs, adverbs, phrases, etc. into a visual format, although there will be times when such analogies can be drawn. The visual speaks with its own authority and with its own system that suggests how meaning is decoded. As the descriptive phrase 'critical discourse analysis' has been alluded to a number of times it is necessary to define and explain its meaning within the context of this work and explain how it might inform my methodology. I use the term critical discourse analysis to describe those analytical factors that can be grouped together as part of the socio-cultural underpinning and power relationships which influence the way meaning is transferred (Gee 1999, pp.85-86, Coulthard 1997, p.3). Such underpinnings are not only the social, cultural and power stimulus which go to make up a part of the discourse (Culler 1997, p.4), but the relationships, their genesis of attitudes and cultural structures, the way

they may or may not support the corporate cultural *status quo* and perhaps create their own changes or even cause adjustments to the boardroom policies passed down the management hierarchy for implementation. (Hayes and Watts 1986, pp.127-31)

There is the possibility always extant in commercial communication that the products of the sign-maker can become sanitised as a result of many inputs from managers senior to the sign-maker and whose views are therefore regarded as sacrosanct. They are still, however, in the active form within which they have been created if we view the sign-maker in both a singular and plural form. During the process by which the sign-maker(s) 'manufacture' the final artefact a number of paradigm choices within the genre take place. These have been included as a chart headed Corporate Ethnography which follows the table of Summarised Meaning (Figure 11). Both tables refer to the pilot test on the Toyota photograph (Illustration A) in full colour and the black and white version (Illustration B following page 176).

The table headed Corporate Ethnography (Figure 7 and its hypothetically completed form Figure 8) is an attempt to classify the paradigmatic choices available to the sign-maker without attempting, as stated earlier, to identify the social semiotic process behind the choices. The classification must therefore contain an element of subjectivity because without independent research based on interview with those involved in the selection process we cannot know what parameters were set by the senior managers who briefed the signmaker. Nor can we identify what

Hodge and Kress would call:

logonomic systems which constrain social behaviour through rules prescribing semiotic production: who is able/forbidden to produce or receive what meanings under what circumstances and in what codes ... To function they must rely on known categories and rules and active enforcers with means of communication and enforcement. (Hodge and Kress 1999, p.266)

I discuss here only those systems suitable for use in the analysis of a finished product. My concern is with the final visual text as an articulation of the company positioning strategy obtained by interview and in what form those meanings were transferred by means of the artefact, in this case the brochure. The template which draws upon critical discourse analysis includes a checklist of tools of enquiry which forms a basis for cross checking the results. In preparing the following section on the subject of critical discourse I have drawn upon the work of Barker and Galasinski, 2001, using my own titles as headings. Barker and Galasinski (2001) argue that within critical discourse analysis "analyses are interpretative: they are laden with researchers' views and beliefs". They maintain that "if the linguistic analysis is anchored within systemic-functional linguistics it can help reduce the interpretative aspect of analysing by anchoring it on the discourse form itself". By using the template approach and thus creating a framework within which managers can carry out their analysis it is my belief that the subjective interpretative element mentioned can be reduced.

a) **Defining the Visual Discourse**

The analyst should attempt to separate the social function of each visual item from its function in the context within which it takes place. In the process it separates the discourse occurring by means of that social or power situation and the discourse in society as a whole. Later I use the terms primary discourse to mean the first, i.e. the discrete social function itself, as an item of signification, and secondary discourse to describe its semiotic role within the wider context. Culler (1997, pp.56, 57, and 66) discusses the question of meaning potential in linguistics when he says "we have the meaning of a word and the meaning or provocations of a text; then in between, there's what we might call the meaning of an utterance: the meaning of the act of uttering these words in particular circumstances ... there are at least three different dimensions or levels of meaning: the meaning of a word, of an utterance, and of a text." He makes a point relevant to my discussion on the role of sign-makers when he says (p.56) "... the text, which here represents an unknown speaker ... is something the author has constructed, and its meaning is not a proposition but what it does, its potential to affect readers."

My reason for translating this concept into a structured format of what I have termed primary and secondary discourse suitable for application to the visual is that corporate brochures tend to be the product of group decision. Individual members of that group may, and often do, insist on the inclusion of an item in an illustration because it suits their own

functional or departmental agenda (i.e. the production manager may demand an inclusion that the marketing director would exclude if the decision was in that executive's hands). Thus an illustration may contain signifiers whose signified meaning differs when the total illustration is viewed. An example would be the positioning of a motor vehicle in the picture so that it gives prominence to an engineering advantage, the suspension, for example, but in doing so the marketing requirement for the projection of a specific type of cultural lifestyle in the picture may be reduced. Because of the equal seniority and importance within the company of the marketing director and the production director such differences are not necessarily resolved and illustrations can appear with a signifier working at both primary and secondary levels of discourse offering a range of meaning potentials. My term 'primary discourse' refers, therefore, to the discourse which informs that specific ingredient whereas secondary discourse refers to the wider environment which may embrace the whole brochure as a single syntagm.

Barker and Galasinski (2001) drawing upon van Dijk (1997) suggest there are eight principles of critical discourse analysis that are important. I list these, using my own headings, as:

- 1. Is it Clean?** Do the texts occur in the form in which they were prepared, i.e. not edited or changed or context altered?
- 2. What is the Context?** Are they examined within the global and local context? Is the text a part of that context?

3 What is the Socio-Cultural Content?

Discourse is a form of social practice that should be identified.

4. Explanation of Discourse Items in Context of those that Precede and Follow it

Units to be explained in relation to those which preceded it and the function of those that follow.

5. How do the Units Operate within their Larger Units?

Note if there is a hierarchical structure to the units and whether they are being used functionally to construct or understand that hierarchy.

6. What are the Layers?

Identify the levels and how they relate to one another. Are there different constructional units, i.e. sound, words, format, etc?

7. What is the Meaning?

What does he or she mean in this situation? Why is this being said or meant?

8. What are the Rules?

Define the rules then consider how they are being followed or ignored.

Sign-makers are themselves working as members of a social or cultural group and are affected by what has gone before in that discourse. The analyst can, if data is available, attempt to identify socio-cultural influences which perhaps reflect primary and reference opinion leader groups' influences on that sign-maker. Discourse is a system of options from which sign-makers and recipients make their choices. It is necessary therefore to identify which aspects of their reality appear to be chosen and then how and where they are arranged. As shown in the Corporate Ethnography Table (Figure 7, and 8 following page 202) where possible alternative choices are suggested, it is important to consider how alternative representations would have changed the overall meaning.

b) First and Second Orders of Meaning

There is a hierarchical structure of signifiers and signified. The first order of meaning may dominate the first association of the viewer with the text but later, as further consideration is given by the viewer, a second order of meaning occurs by conscious or unconscious association, (note item 6 above). The concept of first and second orders of meaning is suggested by Barthes (1967, p.58):

For Saussure (*General Course in Linguistics* pp.122) the relationship between linguistic terms can develop on two planes, each of which generates its own particular values; these two planes correspond to two forms of mental activity ...The first plane is that of the syntagms; the syntagm is a combination of signs,

which has space as a support ... each term here derives its value from its opposition to what precedes and what follows; in the chain of speech, the terms are really united *in praesentia* ... The second plane is that of the associations (if we still keep Saussure's terminology): 'beside the discourse (syntagmatic plane), the units which have something in common are associated in memory and thus form groups within which various relationships can be found' ... unlike what happens at the syntagmatic level, the terms are united in *abstentia*. (Barthes 1967, p.58)

Similar views are expressed by Norris (1987, pp.25-26) and Culler (1990, p.35 and p.74). I would argue, that the first plane suggested by Barthes, what I prefer to term throughout this thesis as the first order of meaning, is the process that takes place when the selected viewer (selected by virtue of the design and controlled availability to the viewer of the brochure) first notices and glances at a commercial illustration. The second plane, or second order of meaning takes place as interest is aroused. If that interest is held for sufficient time there is generated, as Barthes (1967) and Norris (1987) suggest, a series of cultural and social associations beside the syntagmatic plane. Based upon this assumption I have grouped selected questions within the templates used in the methodology under such levels of meaning.

It should be noted at this point that the quotation from Barthes above and by extension my own comments, do not refer to Barthes description (*Mythologies* 1993) of the sliding signifier where he uses the terms *first*

and second order of semiological systems. This concept and its accompanying terminology is explained by Palmer (1997, pp.55-59) when he discusses Barthes' book *Mythologies* explaining how a signifier (garden roses) signifies (passion) thus creating a sign (passionified roses) and how the sign then becomes a signifier itself signifying a signified (Valentine's Day) which creates a new sign (product consumption and expenditure of money as romantic obligation). Barthes is quoted by Palmer (1997) as using a similar descriptive phrase to those I have applied to a different situation when he writes "in 'myths' the sign itself becomes a signifier in a new system of meaning, creating 'a second-order semiological system'". It is important to avoid any misunderstanding of the usage to which I put the terms 'first' and 'second' orders of meaning when analysing the corporate text.

c) **Interactive Power Play**

Mention has been made of the interplay of power between viewer and signmaker. To help in the identification of that interplay can we identify interactional control? Who, for example, started the viewer/signmaker exchange? Who ended it? Will the brochure, in the analysis of Rover Group material, be obtained by the reader through a visit to an automotive distributor, through a phone call or letter, or by means of a regular mail shot as a result of the viewer/reader's name being included on the company's mailing list. How has the sign-maker initiated each topic in the text? Barker and Galasinski (2001) make the point that a reverse effect can also be noticed whereby the representation may rest

on a set of classifications of people and circumstances which have been marked by the power differentiation which may in itself affect the interpretation of any contradictions within the text.

d) **Historicity and the Visual Lexis**

Discourse analysis is not a 'snapshot' of social and cultural interactions which are taking place during one moment in time. There is a historicity present by which the images in visual communication refer to, or are the product of, earlier images which themselves grew from their antecedents. The area of corporate identity is a cauldron of such intertextuality where art, applied design and corporate logo systems feed off each other to produce what Fairclough (1989) calls their own "order of discourse". Earlier I mentioned the paradigmatic process and how it informs our understanding of the influences on the sign-maker. Examples of this process will be seen when we analyse the Toyota photograph in the Ethnographic Tables that follows page 202. As part of the process critical discourse analysis can be used to consider the vocabulary or lexis of items used by the sign-maker. Apart from my examples which happen to be drawn from one industry, hence the positioning of motor vehicles in the picture and their relationship to the background, there is also a need to itemise visual ingredients as signifiers without context, even assuming their signifieds may change when considered within context. In comparison with other pages within the brochure or in comparison with similar brochures produced at another time, the mere comparison of the visual vocabulary transfers its own meaning.

e) The Role of Metalanguage

In linguistics the concept of metalanguage describes the reference by linguistic expression to other expressions (i.e. outside the immediate effect of the written word or sentence) or as defined in *The Hutchinson Dictionary of Ideas* (1995, p 347), " Metalanguage is any language which describes in technical terms, the properties of another language. Thus linguistics is a scientific language about language." Fairclough (1998, p.241) describes it simply as " a language for talking about language" and by doing this it makes its own statement about the writer. In a visual context, I cannot strictly use the term visual metalanguage to mean individual elements which identify a code which in itself refers to the visual language being used within that genre. But there is, however, a similar process which can and does introduce by its paradigmatic selection the sign-maker's point of view and thus creates its own relationship with the viewer. O'Sullivan, et al (1994, p.179) refers to the function "performed by all texts of identifying the language or codes that they are using". O'Sullivan et al (1994, p.179) gives the example " 'Beanz Meanz Heinz', which only makes sense because it identifies itself as using the code of ad-language. 'Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds' makes one kind of sense to those who interpret its metalingual function as saying 'I am poetic language' and another for those for whom the metalingual function says 'I am drug induced discourse'", they are identifying one of the problems of the extent to which, or not, corporate communications practitioners analyse the metalanguages they use in

visual constructions. Even the act of retelling through the use of the same or similar images in a later picture or situation (i.e. repetitive use of class-ridden imagery such as a background of castles or middle-class mock-Tudor housing) involves the signmaker in an element of control. The act of retelling and the context within which it takes place, along with its visual structure and use of vectors, creates its own transfer of a meaning within those visual structures. As in linguistics where certain words or visual 'participants' as Kress and van Leeuwen terms them, create a cohesion not by repetition so much as by their own meaning. These words in linguistics are ones such as 'therefore', 'because', 'but'. Apart from the normal conjunctions however, there are elliptic situations where an assumption is made about something that went before. Someone may say to his wife, "We must settle New Zealand this afternoon", thus making the assumption that his wife will know they are not talking about some political act but are referring to arrangements for their holiday. I would argue in visual terms such cohesive functions can be performed through the repetition of a small element within a picture or by metonymic icons or symbols which position the total picture or continue the narrative by reference to a whole. For example, the background in a photograph of a car might show a mock Tudor residence. Through the use of a small recognisable symbol or icon of middle-class life such as green rubber boots which appear visually in countless editions of country magazines such as *Country Living* or *Country Life*, an image can be carried over of good, or even better living, into a later picture which has a different model of a car in the foreground but countryside in the background. The cohesion of the narrative is not because of a formal

structure but because of the social rules or codes accepted by those viewers who were selected by the signmakers as target readers. It is a cohesion created through the use of social and cultural codes planted within illustrations whose overall subject may change from page to page within different sections of the same brochure. It is what Barker and Galasinski (2001) say in reference to linguistic cohesion makes “the text stick together” so that the links help form a larger piece. They go on to say that there can be coherence due to social rules of communication that are not necessarily visible units but they can be felt rather than measured.

As the formats for the templates have been developed I have been aware of the focus of the communications practitioner who will be asking, “What is the corporate objective of this piece of analysis?” The answer is that the questioning process identifies and then separates two functions. At one level it will provide an approach to the identification of the factual data in the visual text thus focusing on what is there and about which there should be little debate. It might, for example, list the picture as containing a car, a tree and a driver. These are the hard facts only. At a second level the template might operate on those areas where the subjectivity of the analyst is likely to intrude into the interpretation. It is then that CDA helps reduce that subjectivity of the interpretation. The analyst will bring to each project an ethnic, a social and indeed a corporate cultural background. The more these elements are reduced in influence as part of the interpretative process the more likely it is the practitioner will arrive at solutions that align with colleagues who too

could use these techniques. Together they will achieve a greater understanding of the visual texts under examination within the group situation.

The elements discussed in this chapter form the foundation upon which I have discussed the work of Kress and van Leeuwen. As a result I have developed a selection of the Kress and van Leeuwen concepts into a format from which practical tools can be created. Before considering such a selection it is important to review the work of Kress and van Leeuwen. Chapter VI has been written in sufficient detail to be used, if required, to inform background instructions that may be given to a practising manager before utilising the templates described.

CHAPTER VI

KRESS AND VAN LEEUWEN: DESCRIPTION OF THEIR WORK

The Kress and van Leeuwen publication *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (1996) sets out to provide the first systematic and comprehensive account of the grammar of visual design. By looking at the formal elements and structures of design, colour, perspective, framing elements and composition, the authors examine ways in which images communicate meaning. In the preamble they reiterate the argument discussed in the introduction to this thesis when they say that as “we move from a culture dominated by language to one in which visual literacy becomes increasingly important”, guidelines, or what the publishers of their book (Routledge) term a “tool-kit”, is needed for reading images. I attempt to provide such a tool-kit within the specialist context of commercial communication.

Kress and van Leeuwen argue (Introduction, p.1) that the study of visual meaning has been based on formal aesthetic descriptions and often on the psychology of perception and the way the structure of a picture has had the objective to attract attention. In the case of advertisements, a common example of this objective, readers are aware that persuasion is the purpose of the producers of the advertisement. I have already quoted how audiences understand the metalanguage within which texts are placed, when I quoted O'Sullivan, et al (1994, p.179) saying that 'Beanz Meanz Heinz' makes sense only because it identifies itself as using the code of ad-language. Thus customers understand the communications contract within which the advertiser is

operating. This is one of the reasons for the negative correlation that exists between the recall of advertising copy and that of editorial. According to a report prepared for the international consultant Burson Marsteller Ltd. (Bennison 1980), the level of recall of editorial content over advertising content recorded a score three times higher.

Work carried out as long ago as the 1960s (Bogart.L 1967, p.10) by the American Association of Advertising Agencies showed that "people harbour a certain amount of resentment at being subjected to information which carries no useful meaning for them. The resentment may be of a very low level.". Bogart (1967, pp. 10-11) goes on to say:

much or most advertising can never be meaningful or interesting to any one person at any one moment of time. There are bound to be advertisements for products we do not use, some for brands with which we have had poor experiences, and some that we may look down our noses at.

I mention these factors to emphasise the difference between marketing or consumer communication and the category under discussion here where a corporation is frequently able to control the distribution of literature to target groups because recipients are already interested or have made a specific request. The result is that the company can control the manner and style of the response by means of the visual and written text.

The Advertising Standards Authority in the United Kingdom demands of advertisers a distinction between printed texts that are part of the editorial of the magazine or newspapers, and texts which only appear because space has been bought for the purpose. Text that is formatted to look like editorial must carry a disclaimer that it is an advertisement or an 'advertising promotion'. Sections 23.1 and 41.1 of The British Code of Advertising and Sales Promotion (1995, still extant) are quite specific:

23.1: Advertisers, publishers and owners of media should ensure that advertisements are designed and presented in such a way that it is clear that they are advertisements.

41.1: Advertisement promotions, sometimes referred to as 'advertorials' should be designed and presented in such a way that it is clear that they are advertisements.

When corporate brochures and similar material (including video and film) are examined, the division between advertising and editorial is not so apparent because such brochures are often read for the purpose of gaining information (in the case of automotive material, it can be technical information). My intention here is to concentrate on concepts based upon the Kress and van Leeuwen work and then apply them to corporate texts. In so doing I hope to assist in the understanding of the process by which meaning is transferred through corporate artefacts. The Kress and van Leeuwen work discusses the way in which people, places and things depicted in pictures are combined into a meaningful whole. Texts tend to select model readers through their choice of

codes, styles and the assumption of specific competencies which is relevant to commercial texts where much time is spent identifying and researching attitudes and lifestyles of target audiences. Whereas Kress and van Leeuwen accept (p.1) that previous approaches to the analysis of visual material have been based on the formal, aesthetic description of images and often on the basis of the psychology of perception, as such they are perfectly acceptable. But they argue this does not tell the whole story. In their discussion on the possibility of transferring the analytical techniques used in the field of linguistics they accept (p.1) there are dangers in using the word 'grammar' for their work on visual texts (the secondary title of their book is *The Grammar of Visual Design*). In linguistics the term refers to a formal structure and this frequently leads to its isolation from the wider meaning. Such formal structure is less easy to identify in visual communications as I shall explain.

There is reference in the work of de Saussure (1993) to the parole (or used language) and the langue (or its grammar) in linguistics, and he attempts to explain their difference by using the metaphor of the game of chess where the rules and concept of the game could be termed the langue and the actual playing of the game as the parole. Kress and van Leeuwen are anxious to gaze away from the concept of visual structure defined by reference to linguistic structure however, arguing the relationship is more general. They maintain visual structures realise meaning just as in linguistics but they point to different interpretations of an experience and a different form of social interaction. They also make it clear (p.16) that they have moved away from the views expressed by Barthes who argued (Barthes 1967, p.10) that the meaning of images always relates to a verbal text and that images by themselves have too many

interpretations to stand on their own as purveyors of meaning. Barthes accepted it was true that images can signify, but never autonomously. He goes so far as to say:

It is far from certain that in the social life of today there are to be found any extensive systems of signs outside human language ... the moment we go to systems where sociological significance is more than superficial, we are once more confronted with language. It is true that objects, images and patterns of behaviour can signify, and do so on a large scale, but never autonomously; every semiological system has its linguistic admixture." (Barthes 1967, pp.9-10)

It can be seen that Barthes argues (1967, p.10 and p.16) that every semiological system has what he calls its "linguistic admixture". There is a visual substance, the meaning of which is confirmed by being duplicated in a linguistic message. This means that part of the iconic message, according to Barthes, is in terms of structural relationships, which are either redundant or taken up by the linguistic system. (Barthes 1977, p.32).

Kress and van Leeuwen (p.17) reject, as I do, Barthes' position. They argue that visual representations not only express meaning that is separate from, and often different from, any verbal text which may or may not surround it, but can and does have its own grammar.

“We take the view,” argue Kress and van Leeuwen (p.17) “that language and visual communication both realise the same fundamental and far-reaching system of meaning that constitute our culture, but that each does so by means of its own specific forms, and independently.” Kress and van Leeuwen do not attempt to transfer the theories of linguistics into those of the visual but accept that both forms communicate via different processes. They quote the distinction between the subjective and the objective as an example. In language, they suggest, subjectivity can be created by the use of words or phrases such as “we believe”, or objectivity by rephrasing it as, “It is said that” or “This is the meaning”. In visual terms subjectivity can be represented through the use of perspective and the perspective angle, or objectively by its absence. Whereas the process clause is unique to language, perspective is unique to the visual image. Kress and van Leeuwen start their approach to communication from a social base. Meanings are considered (p.18) as primarily social meanings, meanings that arise out of the society in which people live. Their application of the social semiotic concepts I described earlier can now be seen within this wider context of their application to visual non-linguistic communications.

Because there is a plethora of differences between societies and the people in them and despite the homogeneity which binds such groups together, messages will replicate these differences through contrasting codings. Thus in a multi-modal text which uses writing and images, it is possible, as we shall see, for the visual text to express different meanings to the written text around it. Later in Chapter One, Kress and van Leeuwen iterate the view that the visual is growing in importance in modern life. In doing so it is becoming increasingly liable to greater control as it is “removed from the sphere of art, to become part

of the more powerful and more public sphere of industrial production, of typography, design, or architecture." (p.27) Conversely, there is a decrease in the control over language, due to the greater variety of accents allowed in the public media and the increasing difficulty in enforcing a standard form of spelling. Kress and van Leeuwen argue, however, that there is a reverse effect on the visual where an increase in codification is appearing as a result of the use of image banks (by advertisers, the media, etc.) and other sources of ready-made images which are easily available in computer written texts. It is this decrease in control that I am attempting to systematise here. In the case of the media the practice of turning to images that are 'on file' from previous editions of newspapers, or film/TV footage available from film library sources, accentuates the mediating effect generated by picture editors and television programmers. Kress and van Leeuwen summarise their position as (p.32):

- i) Visual communication is always coded. It seems transparent only because we know the code already, at least passively, but without knowing what it is we know, without having the means for talking about what it is we do when we read an image. A glance at the stylised arts of other cultures should teach us that the myth of transparency is indeed a myth. We may experience these arts as decorative, exotic, mysterious or beautiful, but we cannot understand them as communication, as forms of writing unless we are, or become, members of these cultures.

- ii) Societies tend to develop ways of talking about codes only with respect to codes that are highly valued, that play a significant role in controlling the common understandings any society needs in order to function. Until now language, especially written language, was the most highly valued, the most frequently analysed, the most prescriptively taught and the most meticulously policed code in our society. (Kress and van Leeuwen, pp.32-33)

To this objective Kress and van Leeuwen have throughout their work discussed compositional concepts which convention has established in the development of visual semiotics. They analyse how such concepts produce meaning, consciously or unconsciously, in modern 'image-making'. It is relevant, in the light of my earlier description of structural semiotics, to quote the Kress and van Leeuwen summation (p.11) of how they view social semiotic theory as a foundation for the analysis they use:

Communication requires that participants make their messages maximally understandable in a particular context. They [the signmakers] therefore choose forms of expression which they believe to be maximally transparent to other participants. On the other hand, communications takes place in social structures which are inevitably marked by power differences, and this affects how each participant understands the notion of maximal understanding. Participants in positions of power can force other participants into greater efforts of interpretation, and their notion

of maximal understanding is therefore different from that of participants who do their best to produce messages that will require a minimal effort of interpretation or from that of participants who, through lack of command of the representational systems, produce messages that are harder to interpret (e.g. children, learners of a foreign language). The other participants may then have made the effort required to interpret these messages or refuse to do so, whether in a school or in a railways station in a foreign country.

Representation requires that sign makers choose forms for the expression of what they have in mind which they see as most apt and plausible in the given context ... The interest of sign-makers, at the moment of making the sign, leads them to choose an aspect or bundle of aspects of the object to be represented as being criterial, at that moment, for representing what they want to represent, and then choose the most plausible, the most apt form for its representation, This applies also to the interest of the social institutions within which messages are produced, and therefore takes the form of the (histories of) convention and constraints. (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, p.11)

But the commercial sign-maker needs to understand what social changes are at work and whether they are understood in their interrelation. Language has always existed as only one mode in a total list of modes which can be used in the production of a text, yet to the majority of communication specialists, many

of them trained in the skills of journalism, the language mode has been paramount.

Kress and van Leeuwen argue (pp.39-40) :

- i) Human societies use a variety of modes of representation.
- ii) Each mode has, inherently, a different representational potential, a different potential for meaning making.
- iii) Each mode has a specific social valuation in particular social contexts.
- iv) A different potential for meaning making may imply a different potential for the formation of subjectivity.
- v) Individuals use a range of representational modes and therefore have available a range of modes of meaning making, each affecting the formation of their subjectivity.
- vi) The different modes of representation are not held discretely, separately, as autonomous domains of the brain, or as autonomous communicational resources in a culture, nor are they deployed discretely, either in representation or in communications; rather, they intermesh and interact at all times.

- vii) Affective aspects of human behaviour and being are not discrete from other cognitive activity, and therefore never separate from representational and communicative behaviour.
- viii) Each mode of representation has a continuously evolving history, in which its semantic reach can contract or expand or move into different areas as a result of the uses to which it is put.

Kress and van Leeuwen believe (p.13) that visual design, like all semiotic processes, fulfil three functions. Functions adumbrated by Michael Halliday, when he asserts there is an 'ideational' function which represents the world around and inside us, an 'interpersonal' one which fulfils that of social interaction and a 'textual function' which makes that text relevant to that context and with other texts. The function that makes text text and links with the extralinguistic situation. (Halliday, 1978).

Kress and van Leeuwen have taken note of these processes and from them developed three of the four subject headings upon which the overall structure of their book is based (the subject headings are not used as titles for their chapters) as:

- Patterns of Representation. These become available through a grammar of visual design and thus with the ways we encode signs visually.
- Patterns of Interaction or what we can do to or for other people with visual communication and the relationship between the maker and the viewer of visual texts.

- The Textual Function or the way the communicative acts cohere into one text.
- The Materiality of the Signs which includes the contribution the tools, materials and format make to the meaning.

In the following sections those elements I consider have a direct application for commercial use are summarised. My aim is to create a taxonomy, the ingredients of which can be 'bundled' into groups suitable for practical application by business executives.

1. **Patterns of Representation**

Kress and van Leeuwen maintain (pp.43-44). that what in language is described in words such as 'action verbs' are in pictures realised by shapes or elements that can be termed vectors. These can be realised, for example, by a figure pointing, an outstretched arm or the line of a building, roof or road. The visual structuring which includes vectoring and the linearity of the story told are described by Kress and van Leeuwen (pp.24-26) and for the purpose of future classification I have used their description as follows:

- Spatial
- Locative (the position of one object in relation to another)
- Motion (a cat climbing up an apple tree)

- Co-operative action
- Social (an interactive process between participants)
- Multi-modal (in terms of typeface, quality of paper, shape and size of text).

Pictorial structures do not only reproduce the structure of reality, they produce images of reality bound to social institutions within which the pictures are produced and read. They are, in fact, ideological. When the participants are shown to be doing something to each other they are connected by a vector. Kress and van Leeuwen term this pattern a 'narrative' and contrast it (p.56) to 'conceptual patterns' which show participants in terms of, inter alia, class, ideology, and other generalised and less stable meanings or by showing an unfolding action. These conceptual structures they argue (p.57), never have a vector. However, in the case of diagrams, it is less easy to identify the action the vectors suggest (p.58). The normal position with a picture is that a text explains what is not immediately apparent in the illustration. In the case of a diagram the process is explained visually and the text provides different and additional glosses. Diagrams often represent events which take place over time but in a spatial configuration. As a result the process becomes a system in itself. When a diagram has only one participant this will also be the actor and the resulting structure is called by Kress and van Leeuwen (p.61) 'non-transactional'. Thus the action in a non-transactional structure has no goal and is therefore not 'done to' or 'aimed at'. Kress and van Leeuwen compare this to the intransitive verb in language where

the verb does not have an object. The actor is the participant from which the narrative or vector derives. Where there are two participants in the visual proposition one is the actor and one is the goal. The goal being the participant at whom the vector is directed. It compares therefore with the transitive verb where the verb takes an object.

Because of their size or position in the picture, the actor and the goal are often the most salient of the participants. They contrast against the background, the colour and its variations, the sharpness of focus of the picture, and possibly also through the psychological salience they have for the audience to whom the picture is intended. Kress and van Leeuwen state that when a vector is created by what they call an "eye-line", the process is reactional and they speak (p.64) not of actors but of 'reactors', not of goals but of 'phenomena'. Quite obviously the reactor who does the looking must be human, or an animal capable of facial expression.

Kress and van Leeuwen (pp.45-46) use the word 'participants' within a picture rather than the words 'objects' or 'elements' because it suggests something is actively happening by virtue of the participants' involvement. That involvement will be social and cultural and as a result is drawn into the syntagm. The word also draws attention to the fact there are two types of participant, the 'interactive participant' who appears to be speaking or listening or is in some way in the act of communication, and a subset which Kress and van Leeuwen describe as 'the implied interactive participant', who is silently instructing us, the

viewer, through the design of the picture. Then there is the 'represented participant' who is the subject of the communication. The represented participant can also be an abstract concept which could perhaps be a subject about which the images are being produced. Other terminology based upon the work of Halliday (1978, and 1985) on functional semiotic theory which although applied only to language by Halliday (1978) does apply within a visual context. The terms he uses are those such as 'actor', 'goal' and something done by an actor to a goal which forms a 'transaction'. The actor is the "participant from whom or which, the vector departs." (p.57). A further extension of such terms is to identify a 'carrier' and an 'attribute' in the sense that the picture does not have to be about what participants are doing to each other but rather the way the participants fit together to make a larger statement. In analysing the participant role each participant may not be separate. There may be four or five people who, because they are performing the same function, can be identified as a single actor especially if they are joined together by a vector or physical contact. It is not necessary for there to be one meaning only with one participant. There may be changes of meaning in different contexts or an interchange perhaps between the visual and the verbal participants where there are captions, labels and other forms of lettering. Where there is a chain of transactional processes there can be a third type of participant. This is when a participant is the goal in respect to one participant and the actor in respect to another. Kress and van Leeuwen refer to this type of participant as 'relay', differentiating it from Barthes' definition (Barthes 1982, pp.38 and 41) of an image-text relation in which the text extends rather than elaborates ('anchors', see earlier) the

visual information. In the Kress and van Leeuwen definition the relays do not pass on what they receive in unchanged form, they always transform the meaning. An additional term used by Kress and van Leeuwen (pp.71, 72, 77) is what they call 'circumstances'. These are participants which could be left out without affecting the basic proposition of the narrative pattern, even if the deletion would cause a loss of information. Another reference made by Kress and van Leeuwen is to what they term 'locative circumstances' (p.71). This relates other participants to a specific participant they call the 'setting' which they say may (p.71) be realised as:

- a) the participants in the foreground overlapping and obscuring the setting
- b) the setting being shown in less detail, or less sharp focus
- c) the setting as more muted or desaturated in colour with the colours tending towards the same hue
- d) the setting being darker than the foreground, or lighter so that it acquires an overexposed or ethereal appearance

These are all gradients and not an either/or situation. A further term apposite in corporate examples, is what Kress and van Leeuwen term the 'circumstances of means'. This describes a situation where there is no difference between the tool and the user. We see an example later (photograph from Toyota Annual Report, page 174) where a company representative is using his pen in a photograph to point to one part in an engine. The pen becomes in the circumstances of means an extension of

the participant. The tools thus constitute the vector which realises the action process and as such need not be viewed as separate objects. On the question of geometric shapes Frutiger (Frutiger 1998, p.43) considers that from "archaeological evidence humankind has an innate feeling for geometry. Traces of primary signs of the same form are found in many regions of the earth, and it may be assumed that they expressed similar meanings for the most varied races at widely different times". He goes on to discuss (Frutiger 1998, pp.43-48) the implications of the basic geometric signs in relation to human culture. Kress and van Leeuwen too, maintain (p.51) that "basic geometric shapes have always been a source of fascination, even of religious awe. Our scientific age is no exception. Circles, squares and triangles have been regarded as pure, quasi-scientific 'atoms' of the visible world." Kress and van Leeuwen quote (pp.51-52) the constructivist artist Naom Gabo when he writes, "The emotional force of an absolute shape is unique and not replaceable by any other means."

Under their broad heading of "Patterns of Representation" Kress and van Leeuwen describe (pp.79-118) how the conceptual representation of participants project a more generalised, more stable essence in terms of class and culture. The first of such processes they refer to (p.81) as the "Classification Process". Kress and van Leeuwen argue (p.81) that the classification processes in a picture may relate the participants to each other in terms of a taxonomy (taxonomy is defined here as a classification with similarities of structure, i.e. as in biology). One set of the participants can play the role of 'subordinates' to at least one of the other participants

who is termed 'superordinate'. A secondary term used by Kress and van Leeuwen (pp.81-83) is 'covert taxonomy' which refers to situations where the superordinate is only indicated in the accompanying text or inferred from similarities the viewer may perceive to exist between the subordinates. Kress and van Leeuwen consider one visual characteristic is crucial in the realisation of covert taxonomies:

the proposed equivalence between the subordinates is visually realised by a symmetrical composition. The subordinates are placed at equal distance from each other, given the same size and the same orientation towards the horizontal and vertical axes."

(Kress and van Leeuwen, p.81)

Sometimes a timelessness or stability is realised by decontextualisation, i.e. the background is plain or neutral, depth is reduced, or a frontal angle has been used to suggest objectivity. The picture itself can constitute a relationship which may not be the same relationship as the reality it portrays. Some participants may be superordinate with relation to one participant and subordinate to another (see examples later in the analysis of the Toyota photograph, page 174). Conceptual classification maintains the same structure as social hierarchy in that the more general idea is represented as having greater power. Visual representation can blur the boundaries between the dynamic and the static. Is the dynamic in reality the instantiation or enactment of an underlying system? Or is the static the systematisation and objectivisation of a dynamic and ever changing reality?

Kress and van Leeuwen describe in some detail (pp.89-108) the analytical processes which relate the participants in terms of a part-whole structure. They note the carrier participant (the whole) and any number of possessive attributes (the parts). A simple example would be a map where the carrier may be the United Kingdom. The possessive attributes are the various counties or major towns. In a brochure or book the focus of the attributes may be similar, i.e. social, population size or cultural but what is important is what attributes have been selected by the creator as criterially relevant. An analytical picture will normally contain neither a vector nor a narrative process nor a compositional symmetry, nor a classificatory process. The picture identifies a carrier but allows viewers to scrutinise this carrier's possessive attributes. There is usually a lowered degree of modality in that the background is plain or out of focus and the pictures have a posed look about them. Yet, having said this, their purpose is interactional rather than representational, the interaction being with the viewer. Some analytical processes can be unstructured in that they show the possessive attributes of the carrier but not the carrier itself. This is especially so when the carrier is abstract. It can be an unordered list as in advertisements which show the parts of a car as a method of impressing the viewer with the amount of engineering expertise that went into its manufacture. There are symbolic processes which are those which show what a participant 'means' or 'is'. There will be the carrier whose identity is established and the symbolic carrier which represents the meaning itself. If there is only one carrier then the symbolic meaning may be established in another way. The first type is called by Kress and

van Leeuwen the 'symbolic attribute' and the latter the 'symbolic suggestive'. Kress and van Leeuwen (p.108) turn to the discipline of art history for a classification of symbolic attributes suggesting there should be one or more of the following characteristics they list as follows:

- i) They are made salient in the representation in one way or another ... by being placed in the foreground, through exaggerated size, through being especially well lit, through being represented in especially fine detail or sharp focus, or through their conspicuous colour or tone.
- ii) They are pointed at by means of a gesture which cannot be interpreted as an action other than the action of 'pointing out the symbolic attribute to the viewer'
- iii) They look out of place in the whole.
- iv) They are conventionally associated with symbolic values. Such conventional symbols were very common in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

Having discussed selected concepts described by Kress and van Leeuwen under the broad heading of patterns of representation (1996, chapters 2 and 3), Kress and van Leeuwen move on to an area of specific interest to this thesis, which is the question of interaction and the position of the viewer. (1996, chapters 4 and 5).

2. Representation and Interaction: Designing the Position of the Viewer

This section is concerned with the interaction between producer and viewer of the image. As Kress and van Leeuwen suggest (p.119) images involve two kinds of participants, the represented participant (the people, places and things in the picture) and the interactive participants (the people who communicate with each other through the images). Kress and van Leeuwen argue there are three kinds of relation:

- i) relations between represented participants
- ii) relations between interactive and represented participants (the interactive participant's attitudes towards the represented participants), and
- iii) relations between interactive participants (the things interactive participants do to or for each other through images).

(Kress and van Leeuwen, p119)

Interactive participants are thus real people, the viewers, who produce and make sense of images in the context of social institutions which to different degrees and in different ways regulate what may be said with images and how it should be said and how the images should be interpreted. The articulation and understanding of social meaning in images has been derived from the visual articulation of social meaning in face-to-face interaction and from what has been learnt from the spatial positions allocated to different kinds of social actors in interaction. Kress

and van Leeuwen consider (p.122) there is a fundamental difference between pictures from which represented participants look directly at the viewers eyes, and pictures in which this is not the case. "When represented participants look at the viewer, vectors, formed by participant's eye-lines" say Kress and van Leeuwen (p122), "connect the participants with the viewer. Contact is established, even if it is only on an imaginary level. In addition there may be a further vector, formed by a gesture in the same direction."

This visual configuration has two functions:

- It creates a visual form of address by acknowledging the viewer explicitly
- It constitutes an 'image act' whereby the producer uses the image to do something to the viewer. This type of image is termed by Kress and van Leeuwen 'a demand'. There is a demand that the viewer enters into some kind of relationship with him or her. The kind of relationship is then signified by other means, perhaps by the facial expression of the represented participant.

The converse of the demand is 'the offer', where the picture addresses the viewer indirectly. The viewer is not the object but the subject of the look. The represented participant is the object of the viewer's dispassionate examination. No contact is made. The viewer's role is that of an invisible onlooker. It offers the represented participants to the viewer as an item of information as though they were in a glass case.

The contrast between the offer and demand concept is summarised as:

The choice ... is not only used to suggest different relations with different others to make viewers engage with some and remain detached from others; it can also characterise pictorial genres. In some contexts, for instance television news reading and the posed magazine photograph, the demand picture is preferred: these contexts require a sense of connection between the viewers and the authority figures, celebrities and role models they depict. In other contexts, for example feature film and television drama and scientific illustration, the offer is preferred: here a real or imaginary barrier is erected between the represented participants and the viewers, a sense of disengagement, in which the viewer must have the illusion that the represented participants do not know they are being looked at, and in which the represented participants must pretend that they are not being watched. (p.126)

Kress and van Leeuwen (p.127) draw upon Halliday with his description of four basic speech acts or speech functions and consider their application to visual analysis. "Each of these functions" say Kress and van Leeuwen (p127) quoting from Halliday, "has its 'expected' and its 'discretionary' (alternative) social response, and each is realised by a specific syntactic arrangement." Thus, just as speech acts, can:

- i) offer information, that is a form of statement with a possible

response of agreement/rejection

- ii) make an offer of goods or services where the response can be acceptance or rejection
- iii) make a demand for information that forms a question and the response can be “don’t know” or “cannot tell you”
- iv) make a demand for goods/services with a response to do it or not.

(Kress and van Leeuwen, pp.127-128)

So too can visual representation perform similar functions through the visual configuration and direction of the gaze of people shown in the picture. The role of perspective is a technique by which visual communication can express subjectivity, or through its absence, project objectivity. Images with a central perspective, for example, show a built-in point of view and the converse holds. Modern television, especially in programmes that are not derived from filmic techniques, such as The News, has taken the technique one step further and challenged perspective within the image. The news reader may have on the left a verbal text, on the right a moving picture and in front of these the reader is talking straight to camera. Differences between oblique and frontal angles can be the difference between detachment (objectivity) and involvement (subjectivity). To summarise the elements of the interactive meaning between the visual and the viewer, the following is a list of how the effects described are realised:

Demand	...	...	...	gaze at the viewer
Offer	...	...	...	absence of gaze at the viewer

Intimate/personal	...	...	close shot
Social	...	...	medium shot
Impersonal	...	...	long shot
Involvement	...	...	frontal angle
Detachment	...	...	oblique angle
Viewerpower	...	...	high angle
Equality	...	...	eye level
Represented participant power			low angle

One of the most important concerns of visual communication, especially with its ability to offer different interpretations to the written text, is for the viewer to be able to gauge the reliability of messages. It is normal for viewers to attach more credibility to some kinds of message than to others.

When we apply our critical faculties to visual images produced for commercial purposes, we must assume there is a hidden agenda behind the creator's work. We do need to trust some of the information we receive visually and Kress and van Leeuwen maintain that trust must be based upon what they call 'modality markers' in the messages themselves. What then are the textual cues for what can be accepted as credible and what should be viewed with greater care? Kress and van Leeuwen maintain these modality markers have been developed out of central values, beliefs and social needs within the groups for which the producers and viewers exist. They are in effect, motivated signs which have arisen out of the interest of the groups mentioned and how those

interests interact within the structures of power that define their social life. As a starting point it needs to be accepted that a social semiotic theory of truth cannot hope to establish an absolute truth. It can only show whether a proposition is represented as true or not. Truth is a construct of the semiotic process arising from the values or beliefs of that group which may be the primary group within which those people exist or the reference group within which they exist at work and to whom they refer for their opinions and attitudes.

The word modality is used in linguistics to refer to the truth value or credibility of statements realised through linguistics about the world. It refers to those motivated signs which arise out of the interest of social groups who interact within the structures of power that define social life and interact across the systems produced by various groups within a society. In linguistics, words and phrases are used such as 'may', 'will', 'must', i.e. he may come and he will come, which accord different degrees of modality as to how the recipient treats a particular utterance. Hodge and Kress (1988, p.122) define modality in social semiotics as a term which describes "the stance of participants in the semiotic process towards the state and the status of the system of classification of the mimetic plane". When this concept is applied to the visual Kress and van Leeuwen make (p.160) a point relevant to my application here of template questionnaires when they refer to the fact that "the grammar of modality focuses on modality markers such as these words" and their related adjectives. To quote Fowler (1998, p.64), "Modal expressions signify judgements as to truth (correct), likelihood (certainly, might),

desirability (regrettable); other modal usage's stipulate obligations (should, ought to) and grant permission (may)". The significance of modality, says Fowler, (1998, p.64) "suggests the presence of an individual subjectivity behind the printed text, who is qualified with the knowledge required to pass judgement, the status to grant leave or assign responsibility."

When we turn to visual communication, therefore, there is a situation where people, places and things are represented as though they are real, as though this is how they exist. The modality judgement will depend on what is considered real in that context or in that society. As Kress and van Leeuwen say, (p.163) "Reality is in the eye of the beholder, or rather what is regarded as real depends on how reality is defined by a particular social group". They go on to say (p.160) that "the term modality comes from linguistics and refers to the truth value". However, although reality is in the eye of the beholder the eye has had a cultural training and is situated in a social setting and a history. Realism for a particular group is an effect of the complex practices which define and constitute that group. A particular kind of realism is itself a motivated sign in which the values, beliefs and interests of that group find their expression. Each realism has its own naturalism, for example, as will be seen when we examine commercial brochures and their texts. Different realisms exist side-by-side in the same cultural context. What is expected and accepted as real in one mode, say in a glossy magazine about the countryside where naturalism is as close as the picture editor can achieve, may differ from the case of photographs of cars in an automotive manufacturer's

brochure. But even here there may be a form of idealised reality which is accepted as idealised by the viewer. They may even identify with the participants, despite the fact they know objectively it is a fantasy environment where the sun always shines and every car is in showroom condition.

Colour has an important role, say Kress and van Leeuwen (pp.165-168) as a marker of naturalistic modality through the different scales available. I discuss colour later, it is only necessary here to define its three roles as modality markers:

- i) Colour saturation, can be on a scale running from full colour saturation to the absence of colour, which is black and white.
- ii) Colour differentiation, on a scale running from a maximally diversified range of colours to monochrome.
- iii) Colour modulation, which is a scale running from fully modulated colour, with many shades to unmodulated colour. At one end the dimensions of colour are maximally reduced, while at the other it is most fully articulated and used to its maximum potential.

There are other modality markers, however, that follow the three listed and which refer to scaled elements of visual modality. They are:

- iv) Contextualisation, which is a scale that runs from absence of background to the most fully articulated. This is a continuum

where levels or degrees of focus, detail or even a muddy darkness are available for use.

- v) Representation can be classified on a scale from maximum abstraction to maximum representation of pictorial detail
- vi) Depth in perspective can run from absence to maximum depth perspective
- vii) Illumination and the play of light; how it is used
- viii) Brightness which is often a representation of naturalness

There are, in addition, factors of sensory orientation where the pleasure principle is allowed to be dominant as in art, advertising, fashion, cooking and various leisure activities such as motoring. Colour in such cases conveys a high modality. It is impossible to remove a degree of subjectivity when assessing the modality configurations as there is a multiplicity of ways in which a photographer or artist relates to and mediates reality in corporate artefacts. Kress and van Leeuwen note that modality markers do not move en bloc in a particular direction across the scales of intensity and this creates an added factor to note during analysis. As we see later, in the material from the Rover Group, the photographs are highly sensory in their depiction of motor vehicles. The colours are intense. The texture or design features of the vehicle are shown in detail. Lighting enhances the polish on the bonnet or rear boot, and surrounding objects tend to have a lower modality except those such as the large country house in some pictures which can be present as participants in their own right within the syntagm. Such objects are given equal definition as the central actor or participant which is the car. In

other words, such pictures are not only sensory but also idealised. The photograph of the motor vehicle has been taken out of a context where it may be assumed would be its normal place of use, i.e. a crowded muddy road where one piece of styling is difficult to differentiate from another, and placed within an idealised context which creates a specular relationship with the viewer who, hopefully, will imagine being in the driving seat of the car. The viewer thus separates need as defined by the psychologist Jacques Lacan (Leader and Groves 1995, p.86. For a more general description of Lacan's concepts see Bowie 1991) from desire in the sense that the viewer needs a car for work or for enjoying leisure but the desire is to express personal success to friends, family and the world. Each of the modality choices in a configuration can be expressive of specific meanings, which then come together in the whole. For the purpose of my research the anchoring point is one of high naturalistic modality but not so natural as to accept the position of muddy crowded streets in the centre of a big City. The audiences for corporate brochures in the automotive industry are likely, because of their inclusion within a high disposable income lifestyle, to accept a level of naturalism in terms of the advertising norm for this type of promotional publicity material, accepting it may not be their own experience of reality. Coding orientations are those sets of abstract principles which inform the way in which texts are coded by discrete social groups, or within specific institutional contexts. Kress and van Leeuwen distinguish the following (p.170):

- i) Technological Coding Orientation, where the dominant concern is the effectiveness of the visual representation as a blueprint. In this case, if colour does not have a scientific purpose for the image then it has a low modality.
- ii) Sensory Coding Orientations, are those where the pleasure principle is allowed to be dominant, i.e. art, fashion, cooking, etc. Colour becomes the source of pleasure and meaning and therefore conveys a high level of modality.
- iii) Abstract Coding Orientations, are primarily used by what could be termed the sociocultural elites of high art, academia or science. More recently, management science should be added as more managers are trained in management science. In such contexts the modality is higher the more the image reduces the individual to the general and the material to its essential qualities. It is considered to be a mark of distinction if the viewer is able to produce or read such texts.
- iv) The Common-sense Naturalistic Coding Orientation, which is the dominant one in Western society. It is the coding that members of Western culture share regardless of how much education they have had. We must accept there are variations within this group and in some cases viewers may be able to accept codes from other groups due to their personal interests.

As Kress and van Leeuwen remark (pp.175-176):

What one social group considers credible may not be considered credible by another. This is why we see modality as interactive, rather than ideational, as social, rather than as a matter of some independently given value. Modality both realises and produces social affinity, through aligning the viewer with certain forms of representation, namely those with which the creator of the image considers himself aligned.

Kress and van Leeuwen summarise their position (p.178) when they say modality is a “system of social deixis which addresses a particular kind of viewer or a particular social cultural group and provides through its system of modality markings an image of the culture, conceptual and cognitive position of the addressee.”

3. The Textual Function

This section summarises how visually communicative acts cohere into the text. Previous sections have been concerned with how images represent relations between the people, the places and the things *they depict in the picture* on the one hand (The Patterns of Representation), and the relations which develop between the image and the viewer (The Patterns of Interaction), on the other. All images generate such interactions and representations. These functions do not exhaust the relationships but I will examine in this section the Kress and van Leeuwen view (p.181) on

total composition and the way the representational elements and their interaction integrate into "a meaningful whole".

In an analysis of multimodal texts (any text whose meaning is realised through more than one semiotic code) we have to ask whether there is a case for analysing the products of the codes separately in compositional terms or in an integrated way. Are the meanings of the whole composition the sum of the meanings of the parts? In attempting to answer this Kress and van Leeuwen commence their analysis (p.183) with the following statement, "Composition ... relates the representational and interactive meanings of the picture to each other through three interrelated systems:

- i) Informative Value. The placement of the elements (participants and syntagms that relate them to each other and to the viewer) endows them with the specific informational value attached to the various 'zones' of the image: left and right, top and bottom, centre and margin.
- ii) Salience. Those elements (participants and representational and interactive syntagms) that are made to attract the viewer's attention to different degrees, as realised by such factors as placement in the foreground or background, relative size, contrasts in tonal value (or colour), differences in sharpness, etc.

- iii) Framing. This is the presence or absence of framing (devices realised by elements which create dividing lines, or actual frame lines) disconnects or connects elements of the image, signifying that they belong or do not belong together in some sense.

These principles of composition apply not only to single pictures but also to composite visuals that combine text and image and perhaps other graphic elements. In the view of Kress and van Leeuwen the integration of different semiotic codes is the work of an overarching code whose rules and meanings provide the multimodal text with the logic of its integration. They maintain there are two integration codes (pp.183-184):

- The code of spatial composition which operates in texts in which all elements are spatially co-present such as paintings, magazine pages, etc.
- The code of temporal composition, in which texts unfold over time, such as speech, drama and music.

Kress and van Leeuwen (pp.183-184) maintain that film and television utilise both, although a rhythm between them may be the dominant integrative principle. They make a point relevant to my examination of commercial brochures when they argue that the modern densely printed page has ceased to be a significant textual unit. The reason is that words and concepts flow from one to the next and the flow could be broken by the typesetter (or computer) at any point in the text without changing its

meaning. Full page advertisements and photographs can change this, however, and the page becomes a single semiotic unit structured not by its linguistic content but by its visual composition. In such cases the verbal text becomes only one of the elements integrated by the codes of information value, salience and framing. When the reader scans the page of a corporate brochure it is not necessarily linear in the direction and movement of the eyes. The eyes may go from centre to margin, in circular fashion or vertically. I refer to this when I discuss 'non-linear composition' a form of page design which encourages multi-directionality. Having said the layout of the page is still visual and carries its own cultural significance, Kress and van Leeuwen discuss the compositional values of page layout. The rules they adumbrate form an element later within my methodology.

Kress and van Leeuwen argue there is a close similarity between the sequential information structure in language and the horizontal structure in visual composition, even though they may find different expression in different semiotic codes. In Western society it is assumed that what appears on the left is the given in informational terms and what appears on the right is new or not yet known to the reader. There is thus a sense of continuous movement from left to right following Western societies' left/right reading pattern. The word 'given' in this case refers to what can be assumed to be known by the viewer and the word 'new' is what is assumed and cannot yet be known. We stress the word 'assumed' as the overall reference is to the communication process and not to what is known or unknown in reality. The sign-makers are themselves making a

statement concerning their ideological cultural position and exert their own position of power over the viewer. Kress and van Leeuwen consider (p.186) that on the page the visual “right seems to be the side of the key information of what the reader must pay particular attention to, of the message ... it follows that the left is the side of the already given, something the reader is assumed to know already, as part of the culture.”

They suggest that:

looking at what is placed on the left and what is placed on the right ... confirms this generalisation when pictures or layouts make significant use of the horizontal axis, positioning some of their elements left, and other, different ones right of the centre ... the elements placed on the left are presented as given, the elements placed on the right as new. For something to be given means that it is presented as something the viewer already knows, as a familiar and agreed-upon point of departure for the message. For something to be new means that it is presented as something which is not yet known, or perhaps not yet agreed upon by the viewer, hence as something to which the viewer must pay special attention. Broadly speaking the meaning of the new is therefore problematic, contestable, the information at issue, while the given is presented as commonsensical, self evident. This structure is ideological in the sense that it may not correspond to what is the case either for the producer or for the consumer of the image or layout; the important point is that the information is presented as though it had that status or value for the reader, and that readers

have to read it within that structure, even if that valuation may then be rejected by a particular reader. (Kress and van Leeuwen, p.187)

Kress and van Leeuwen argue (pp.186-189) that any elongation of a geometric shape creates its own vectoring and serves as a departure point laying emphasis towards the direction it is pointing. The habit in Western societies of working from left to right is transferred to the visual but only the visual of what is on the left can be said to be the side of the 'already given', the accepted. It is that which is agreed by the viewer or something the reader is assumed to know already as part of their culture, or the culture of the team who produced the brochure. Whereas the right hand side is the side of key information of what the reader is expected to pay attention to, or 'move towards', in terms of extra knowledge. The meaning of the new as placed on the right side could be the problematical, the contestable, or even something which is at issue. Kress and van Leeuwen believe (pp.186-189) that as in language it is not necessarily a consistent structure but a gradual wavelike movement from left to right, from before to after. In language the process is 'helped along' by intonation. In the visual image the intonation may be created by peaks of salience through the use of bold headlines, of bars, or bold lettering. Each 'new' element can, of course, become the given when there is an ongoing text. Despite these apparent communication trails there will always be 'deviance'. As a result of cultural classification there is deviance on the part of the reader who may refuse to be part of the community defined by this paradigm. In some advertisements, Kress and

van Leeuwen suggest (pp.193-197) the upper section can be used to denote the 'promise of the product', its emotional status of desire, while the bottom section visualises the product and provides detailed factual information such as where it can be obtained, the address of the manufacturer, the guarantee of objective researchers, etc. The connection between top and bottom is less contiguous, less an ongoing movement than we see in the left/right conformation because the movement of the eyes in Western societies is more likely to be tuned to a left/right movement. Frequently there is a contrast, even an opposition. Not an opposition in terms of overall meaning or syntagm but one that changes mood from emotion and subjectivity to being factual, practical, objective. Sometimes there is a sharp dividing line separating the two, either by an actual line or by a change in style, of words versus pictures, of space. Kress and van Leeuwen summarise this position:

If ... some of the constituent elements are placed in the upper part, and other different elements in the lower part of the picture space or the page, then what has been placed on the top is presented as the ideal, what has been placed at the bottom as the real. For something to be ideal means that it is presented as the idealised or generalised essence of the information, hence also as ostensibly the most salient part. (pp.193-194)

The real is thus opposed to this, in that it presents more specific data, more down-to-earth information, i.e. photographs as documentary evidence, maps or charts. This oppositional effect can also be structured

in the form of a text-image relationship and notice should be taken of whether the text takes the ideologically leading role and the picture the subservient role, or if the roles are reversed, or they each take different elements of information. There is an informational value that relates to the centre and to the margin. It may unify the information surrounding it or provide the meaning from which the surrounding elements draw their own meaning. Kress and van Leeuwen stress the importance of realising that in non-western cultures the centre is frequently the most important element in the structure, as in Buddhist paintings. In Western environments, if a visual composition makes significant use of the centre, placing elements in the middle and others around it, the aim is to present the centre as the nucleus of information on which all the other elements are subservient. In many cases the margins are identical or very similar to each other. This will remove the previously suggested division between given and new or ideal and real. However, not all margins are equally marginal and circular structures can create a gradual and graded distinction between centre and margin. The degree of such relationships will depend on the salience of the centre, and in some cases, even when the centre is empty, it continues to exist *in abstentia* as the invisible pivot around which everything else turns.

Kress and van Leeuwen have discussed how composition determines 'where things go' and how the positioning of elements in a composition endows these elements with different information values in relation to other elements. They emphasise however, that composition of a picture or a page also involves different degrees of salience and as such salience

can create a hierarchy of importance among elements which can change the value between the 'given' and the 'new'. The perception of salience in speech results from a complex interplay between a number of auditory factors such as pitch, loudness, vowel colouring and so on. Salience in visual composition is the integration code and can be judged on the basis of visual clues. It is not often objectively measurable but it results from a trade-off between a number of factors:

- Size
- Focus (sharpness or not)
- Tonal contrast (borders, perhaps, between black and white)
- Colour contrast (saturated versus soft colours)
- Perspective
- Human faces or cultural symbol
- Visual weight

Kress and van Leeuwen note (pp.212-218) that rhythm and balance also form an important bodily aspect to the salience of the page. Further elements in composition that Kress and van Leeuwen discuss are those of 'framing' (pp.214-218). Elements of a composition can, as a matter of degree, be strongly or weakly framed. The stronger the framing the more separate the unit of information. Context may then be left to colour, depending on the more precise nature of the separation. The more the elements of the spatial composition are connected the more they are presented as a single unit of information as belonging to each other. These connectives can be emphasised by vectors such as:

- Use of depicted elements such as structural buildings to lead the eye.
- Abstract graphic elements to lead the eye
- Tilting of photos to lead the eye
- Repetition of colour or shape
- Framing by different styles of photography, drawing etc.

Many of the pages described hereto are read the way they are designed to be read, from left to right, from top to bottom, line by line. There are, however, ways in which a page may be viewed in a manner which was not the intention of the producer of the text. Magazine readers for example may turn pages from the front or the back. They may flick through the magazine pausing to view one part of the page and then moving on. Some readers fall into a repetitive routine whereby they always follow the same path when 'reading' a magazine. This is not always as unstructured as it may appear. Many pages have their reading paths and their composition set up to create a particular hierarchy of movement. They attempt to begin with the most salient element and from there move to the next most salient element. The trajectory is not necessarily similar to that of the printed page, left to right, top to bottom, but it may move in a circle, wherever the salient elements are placed. Some pages may be scanned or they may be read. For this reason the most plausible reading path, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (pp.218-223), becomes the one most readily identified. It is not necessarily coded nor as mandatory as that of a densely printed page. Different readers will follow different paths according to the cultural grouping of the readers. Non-linear texts are becoming more popular. They were first noted in the world of pop music where what is termed the Fanzine became a design-driven cheaply-produced magazine for

followers of a particular pop group. The variations of that non-linear style developed for a printed format have now been transferred to Internet Web designs which have become semiotic material with their own set of codes and signs. It becomes apparent therefore that as there is a choice between differently shaped reading paths these shapes can themselves become sources of meaning. The shape of the reading path itself conveys a significant cultural message. Kress and van Leeuwen summarise their position as:

Linear texts, then, are like movies, where the viewers have no choice but to see the images in an order that has been decided for them, or like an exhibition in which the paintings are hung in long corridors through which the visitors must move, following signs, perhaps, to eventually end up at the exit. Non-linear texts without any clear reading paths are like the new technologies now being introduced, in which viewers can select their own images and view them in an order of their own choosing, or like an exhibition in a large room which visitors can traverse in any way they like. But, again, the way these exhibits are arranged will not be random. It will not be random that a particular large sculpture is placed in the centre of the room, or that a particular large painting has been hung on the wall opposite the entrance, to be noticed first by all visitors entering the room. (Kress and van Leeuwen, p.222)

Non-linear texts impose a paradigmatic as they select the elements that can be viewed and present them according to a certain paradigmatic logic, the logic of centre and margin or of given and new, yet they leave the reader to sequence and connect them.

CHAPTER VII

DEVELOPING A METHODOLOGY

There are objectives and control factors extant within the commercial world that differ from those areas where social semiotics and critical discourse analysis are more usually applied. For this reason I argue that some changes in the format and expression of the concepts so far discussed were needed if the templates were to be applicable within a commercial context. Such changes are discussed later in this chapter. The changes do not affect the underlying philosophical arguments expressed by Kress and van Leeuwen but they do affect how the concepts are grouped and how certain arguments are applied analytically. It is my intention here to describe the templates that have been applied and in doing so I employ the following chronology:

- i) An Introduction
- ii) Factors Relating to the Methodology
- iii) A Taxonomy Informed by the Kress and van Leeuwen Concepts.(I use the word 'taxonomy' here in the generally accepted sense of a classification in relation to it's general principles of a particular science or subject).
- iv) The Development of the Taxonomy for Commercial Use.

- v) Pilot Application to one Photograph from the Toyota 1995 Annual Report

The format used under v) was to show the methodology 'in use' as it might be employed by a practising communications executive, who although untrained in critical discourse analysis (hereinafter referred to as CDA) or social semiotics, may be the project leader or function head concerned with the production of in-house brochure material, or the overall head of a public affairs department responsible for corporate communications. Job titles vary in different organisations but the methodology has been planned for use by the 'function head' who has responsibility for ensuring, not only completion of the publication of the brochure but strategically for its role in the communications chain whose objective is the articulation of board policy in respect to corporate strategy. Each item is now considered:.

1. Introduction to Process

Referring to the previous chapter (VI) where I discuss the Kress and van Leeuwen concepts under four subject groups (p.12), for the sake of continuity I list them with comment below:

- a) 'The Patterns of Representation' which refer to the process of making a representation or, taking Halliday's terminology (1978) the creation of an idea or ideational function. This refers to "the ways we can encode experience visually" (Halliday 1978). This

grouping is concerned with the way signifiers and signifieds *react with each other within the visual text*.

- b) 'The Pattern of Interest' which refers to the interpersonal effect of the representations created, i.e. how they communicate meaning or the relation between the sign-makers and the viewers of the visual texts.
- c) The 'Textual Function', which is the relationship between the above two functions to create a meaningful text.
- d) 'The Materiality' of the signs, i.e. the tools which make the process.

Before discussing these groups a word about the sign-maker(s). In the commercial world, unlike that of the arts or philosophy, the 'sign-maker' in the physical sense is likely to be a composite of many people (Winner, 1987. pp.21-34). There may be a team of executives each of whom has been trained in different disciplines and functions. That team may, for example, consist of the director of public affairs and the director of marketing, supported by their respective departments and by specialist design and graphics consultants, along with intermittent input from the director of human resources. In some cases, a member of the board of directors such as the deputy chairman or chief executive may be involved if they have the responsibility to represent the decisions of the board regarding corporate communications (Watts 1986, pp.168-172). During

the signmaking process the social, cultural and psychological backgrounds of these executives will combine and fuse in terms of influence with their commercial and professional training. The result is that the composite influence will guide the selection of what they, as a team, see as the criterial aspects of the text within the given context (Watts 1986, pp.54-67). They are, in fact, looking for the most plausible signifiers to express a previously agreed signified.

Earlier, when I discussed the use of critical discourse analysis, I argued that such applications can help reduce the subjective element in the interpretation of data. The need to achieve such a reduction in subjectivity is because of the 'team' involvement in the development of corporate literature. The signs are of course motivated by the sign-makers who make choices thus creating the need for paradigmatic decisions within that genre. By identifying such points of decision the analyst can focus the team on why such choices were made, and their effect.

2. Factors Relating to Methodology

It is apparent from the previous paragraph there is a difference in emphasis between the headings used by Kress and van Leeuwen regarding, for example, what they term 'the Pattern of Representation' by which the sign-maker transfers or encodes meaning into a semiotic form, and the formal listing by the analyst of those paradigm points in each syntagm where choices regarding the use of signifiers within that

genre would take place. There is a subtle difference between the process by which the sign-maker decides from the fact that (Kress and van Leeuwen, p.41) the “semiotic systems offer an array of different ‘interpersonal’ relations, some of which will be favoured in one form of visual representation ... others in another” and the choices which in the opinion of the communications analyst were available to be used. Although the quotation refers to the interpersonal rather than the ideational function, the point still holds in terms of the “array” of choices available. Referring to my statement concerning the team approach to production I must assume that the director of public affairs working closely with the communications analyst who may be no more than the deputy head of department and as such also untrained in semiotic theory, will be the final arbiter for sign-off. Commercial literature produced within a commercial environment is usually ‘signed-off’ by a senior manager or managers before passing to ‘production’. (Winner 1987, pp.21-34). It will be the executives who make the ‘sign-off’ who are most likely to employ the templates I describe. I should emphasise there is no common management structure among companies for this process and each organisation evolves systems that suits their style, culture and organisation. Depending upon the relationship between sign-maker(s) and ultimate viewer (what the marketing and public affairs executives term their ‘target audience’) so will depend the extent to which the sign-maker(s) team is in a position of power regarding the effort which is to be made by the end viewer to decode the meaning(s). In the case of sales and marketing literature the customer holds a significant level of power as decision-maker regarding a purchase. In corporate literature the

balance is more equally distributed. The end user may need the information in the text for purposes such as financial appraisal (if an investment analyst), technical detail (if a journalist or government representative) or for broader information about the company (if an executive is with a supplier company or has responsibility within a merger/predator company) or as a business studies academic.

If the ideas described by Kress and van Leeuwen are to be applied by practitioners untrained in semiotic theory it is necessary to simplify some elements into a format of questions to be answered in terms of a yes/no or perhaps used as extensions to other questions applying to a related subject. Kress and van Leeuwen admit (p.12) that in their book "... we focus on the system of visual communication rather than its uses". In my thesis it is the *uses* which concern me. Earlier I listed one area of discussion in Kress and van Leeuwen's book, that of the representation process. That concerns the choices available to the sign-maker to express ideas about the criterial factors which need to be expressed about elements within the picture. Although this process is important in terms of the paradigmatic choices available and their significance in terms of the different meanings which may have been created if alternative choices were made, my primary concern here is the meaning which will be apparent to the target audience, i.e. the interpersonal function. There are thus differences in emphasis, although not in content, between the Kress and van Leeuwen discussion and the objectives of my thesis.

Kress and van Leeuwen have developed their arguments on the basis of

how ideas are expressed visually by sign-makers, in particular how they express meaning in relation to the visual participants within a picture and how the participants interact. They discuss then the relationship between the items within the picture and the viewer, then examine how these two ingredients work to express one meaning. Finally they analyse how the material (the system of inscriptions, quality of paper, layout, etc.) add a further dimension to the meaning transfer. In terms of their objective, which is to work towards the creation of a visual grammar by understanding the processes of meaning transference in this medium, the stages and grouping of their arguments are logical. The function of the communications analyst is to agree or reject the final work and check whether the meaning that needs to be expressed meets the criteria of company positioning. Their concern is less with the process and 'system' (Kress and van Leeuwen p.12) but more with the 'use' to which the text is to be put and the context in which the viewer will see the brochure. My concern therefore is with the meaning which is likely to be transferred as a result of the text and which meaning will 'come across' first to the viewer and which will be transferred or understood on measured reflection. If the meaning, or an attention-getting element within that meaning, fails to interact with the viewer then the rest of the brochure will remain unread.

This set of objectives means there is a need for the model to be concerned more with the signified meanings that will become quickly apparent to the viewer, rather than which meanings generate an idea within the ingredients of the picture. My concern is what ingredients

relate directly to the viewer and what effect the materiality has on that process. In fact the material, because of its physicality may in many cases, especially where quality of paper, vibrancy of colour and style of the layout are emphasised, have a more immediate effect on the viewer than the other ingredients. Such items of materiality may generate the important first stage of attention holding before the transfer of meanings represented within the text are decoded. There is a need for a commercially viable mode of analysis, the design of which is the purpose of this work, and in a later section I emphasise the difficulty of ordering the analytical questions to achieve the chronology and context required. However, because the commercial aims are the reasons for the analysis it is helpful if I summarise the conceptual questions which because of their end use may need to be specifically ordered. Taking account of these factors, and before I suggest the reasons for any changes in individual expression, I would argue on grounds of ease of use the conceptual units need to be expressed where possible in a closed question and answer format. The answers to the questions can be built into a matrix that will meet the objectives of the analyst which is to evaluate the extent to which the board of directors requirements have been met in that item of literature. The analyst thus negotiates with the visual text, collects the data, interprets it and expresses the results in a format that informs the strategic decision-making process in relation to changes needed in that brochure. My objective, then, is to create a template valid in terms of the semiotic work of Kress and van Leeuwen but transmuted (perhaps translated is a more apt expression) into a format which meets commercial criteria. The approach I have adopted for the development of

such a template is to first create a summary in checklist form of the concepts of Kress and van Leeuwen. That list can then be examined to ascertain if, how and where it meets the criteria needed, remembering that Kress and van Leeuwen do not set out to produce a structured model by which a methodology can be applied directly to individual pictures or visual texts. Their work is concerned with a description of the social semiotic concepts that could be applied to visual texts.

There are some areas of analysis (Barker and Galasinski, 2001) not propounded by Kress and van Leeuwen but for reasons I discuss later provide a process for the collection of additional data. In addition to this, further work on the use of colour was carried out by consultant Georgiana van Walsum who was commissioned by myself on behalf of a client company. This work is used by me to inform the discussion on colour modality.

The final stage before analysing the Rover brochures was, as stated above, to pilot test the taxonomy to assess its effectiveness within a limited situation. For this I chose arbitrarily a single photograph from the 1995 Annual Report of the Toyota Motor Corporation. (see illustrations A and B). The test provided data in regard to the effectiveness of the process as applied to a single picture regardless of the total page or its role within a complete brochure. Later, I tested the overall process on brochures published by the Rover Group motor company. This provided an opportunity to compare similar brochures published annually over a three-year time frame. The years in question, 1995, 1996, 1997, were

those during which my field work of interviews and discussions with executives was undertaken. The reason for my choice of a Toyota photograph, however, as opposed to using one segment of a Rover brochure was to avoid mediation due to my knowledge of what the Rover board were attempting in their own brochures. By pilot testing the first template on material totally unrelated to the work I was completing at Rover I was able to test one part of the methodology in terms of its interactional qualities with myself as the reader. I also chose Toyota because they too are an automotive company who coincidentally were attempting to sell their products into the same socio-economic sectors of the automotive market (the ABC1 socio-economic group) as Rover.

3. Taxonomy Based on Kress and van Leeuwen Concepts

As a starting point in the development of the core template the concepts of Kress and van Leeuwen as discussed in the previous chapter (VI) are summarised here in checklist form. For the sake of continuity I have maintained for this summary only the Kress and van Leeuwen descriptive headings they use in their book, stated earlier as Representation, Interpersonal, Textual and Material.

Summary of Kress and van Leeuwen's Concepts and their Classification

1. Patterns of Representation

a) The Structure of Representation

- i) Linearity and Narrative Sequence with unfolding action
Identify interactive participants (actor, goal and recipient and identify where actor acts on goal then becomes goal)
- ii) What are the represented participants (people, places and things in the picture?)
- iii) Implied interactive participants who silently instruct the viewer through the design of the picture
- iv) Carrier and possessive attributes
- v) Note subordinate and superordinate participants
- vi) Trace vectors and transactions (NB eye-line reactions and phenomenon and 'circumstances of means', i.e. tools and user becoming one)
- vii) Process of change (the 'given' and the 'new')
- viii) Transitory spatial arrangement/concept (yes/no response)
whether participant is a generalised essence of:

Class

Structure

Meaning

Is the Linearity (position of one object in relation to another):

- i) Spatial?
- ii) Reading paths?
- iii) Motion (i.e. cat climbs tree)?
- iv) Co-operative?
- v) Social (Interactive process between participants)?

b) Perspective (subjective/objective) and Viewer (including also the position of the viewer as an invisible onlooker):

Demand	...	...	...	gaze at the viewer
Offer	...	...	...	absence of gaze at the viewer
Intimate/personal	...	...		close shot
Social	...	...	...	medium shot
Impersonal	...	...	...	long shot
Involvement	...	...	...	frontal angle
Detachment	...	...	...	oblique angle
Viewerpower	...	...	...	high angle
Equality	...	...	...	eye level
Represented participant power				low angle

NB: (b) above is a concept I decided to move into the ideational from the interpersonal grouping because of its importance in terms of the generation of early attention by the viewer. Strictly it

is, of course, an example of the interpersonal function but due to the different aims of the thesis the early attention factor is important commercially. There are other such examples in this summary which adumbrates the first stage in the evolutionary process towards the core template.

c) Description of line and framing

d) Signmakers' criterial factors:

Cultural, (signmaker in socio-economic terms)

Power relationship, (signmaker to viewer)

History of the sign / its tradition of use.

Icons, and Symbols used in relation to participant(s).

Contextual (including layout), role of carrier

Representation of:

- Detail
- Depth
- Tonal shades (scale from absence to maximum).

e) Identification and stages of metaphor:

- Identify signifier (name and list)
- Identify signified (name and list)
- Causal relationships

f) Identify if and how:

People

Places

Things, (do they combine into meaningful whole which is or is not an extension of the meaning of the picture, page or full brochure?)

g) Locative Circumstances and Relationships:

Foregrounding

Backgrounding,

Is there foregrounding to create stress/contrast?

Is locative function realised by overlap, gradient of focus, colour saturation?

Angles, curves and other geometrics.

2. Patterns of Interaction/Interpersonal

a) Coding Interaction and Orientation regarding Modality:

Technological

Sensory

Abstract

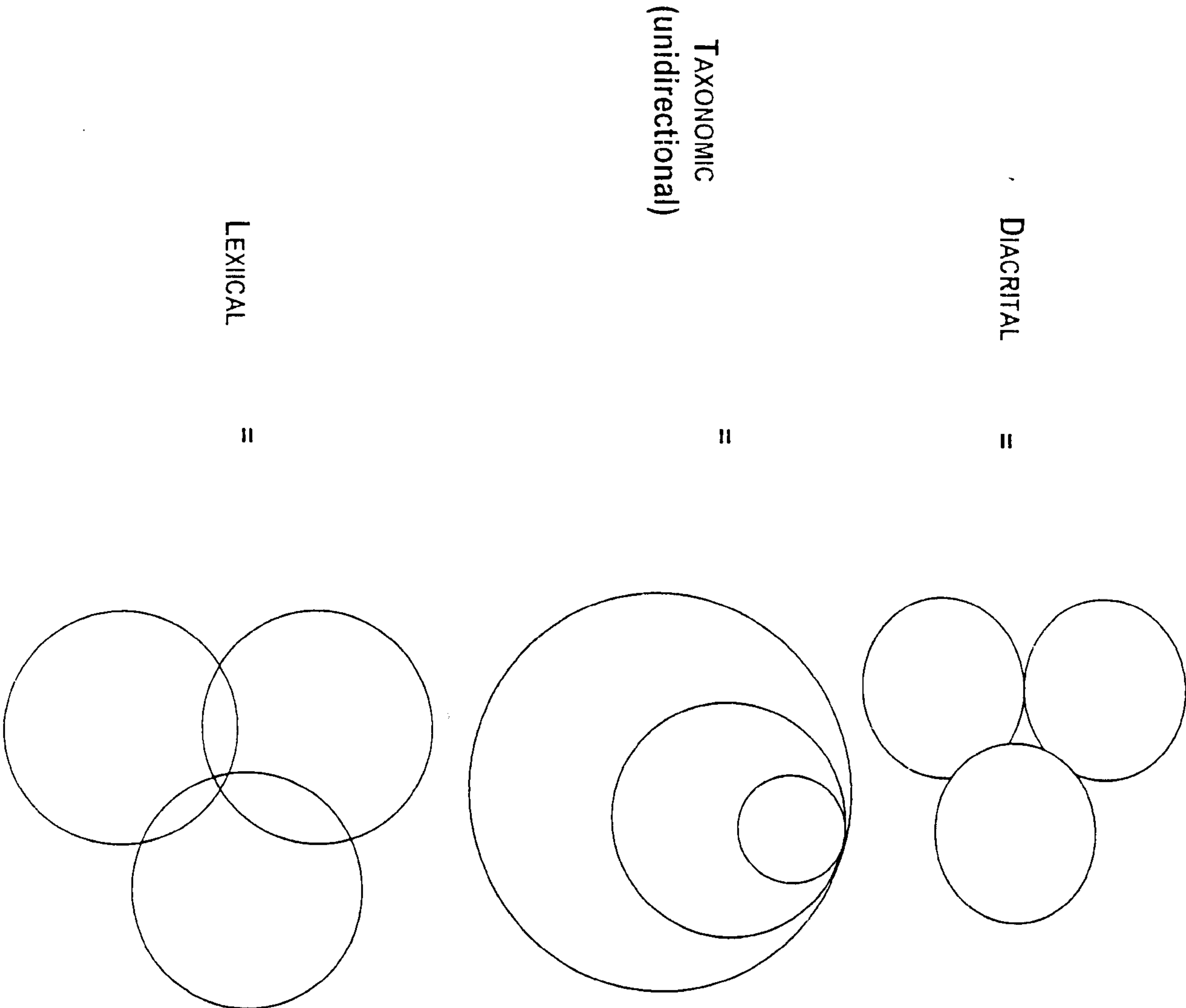
Naturalistic Norm

(Note should be taken here of any uncoded reading patterns present. A text selects a model reader through its choice of code, style and an assumption of a specific competence. What, therefore, is the social meaning of the picture and are there exclusions of other viewers because of its choice? This is a frequent occurrence in commercial material where there is often a lack of focus in defining the company's target audience.)

b) Colour Modality Marker list:

- Colour Saturation (scale full colour saturation to absence of colour)
- Colour Differentiation (scale maximum range to monochrome)
- Colour Modulation (scale full modulation to plain unmodulated)
- Contextualisation (scale absence of background to full articulation/detail)
- The Detail of Representation (scale maximum abstraction to maximum representation of detail)
- Depth (scale absence of depth to maximum deep perspective)
- Illumination (scale full play of light/shade to absence)
- Brightness (scale maximum degrees of brightness to black and white)

POLYSEMIC CLASSIFICATION



c) Participant Demands (Image/Viewer Relationship/Offer)

d) Unisemic or Polysemic classification: (see Figure 5)

- Diacritical (distinctive and separate from each other)
- Taxonomic (classificatory, i.e. a series of similar meanings linked in one direction, see Figure 5).
- Lexical (a signifying function with degrees of overlap)

(The three descriptive terms above are based on those used by Guiraud (trans.1975 pp.11-13)). He suggests “there are three types of code according to whether the signs stand in a logical relation of exclusion, of inclusion or intersection”. A corporate logo or logo design system can and frequently is, polysemic with meanings intertwined within the basic design. In corporate positioning analysis it can be relevant to classify these relationships using the three headings described by Guiraud above and shown in diagrammatic form in figure 5.)

e) Social Deixis. (Note any references as result of context of the socially identified visual articulations.)

3. Textual Function

This grouping describes the ways in which the representational and interactive elements are made to relate to each other and (Kress and van Leeuwen, p.181) “the way they are integrated into a meaningful whole”. For example, composition can relate these elements through three interrelated systems created through the multi-modality of interrelated systems, such as:

Informative Value: Placement of elements (participants and syntagms that relate them to each other and viewer) endows them with informational value attached to the ‘zones’ of the image: left and right, top and bottom, centre and margin.

Salience: elements (participants and representational/interactive syntagms) that attract viewers to different degrees, as realised by placement in the foreground or background, relative size, contrasts in tonal value (or colour), differences in sharpness, by:

Size

Focus

Tonal

Placement

Colour control

Human faces

Framing: Presence or absence of framing (elements which create dividing lines, or actual frame lines), disconnects or connects elements of the image, signifying they belong or do not belong together.

- a) Relationship between text and visual (Their interaction? Which comes first?)
- b) Locative:
 - left/right
 - top/bottom
 - centre/margin
- c) Visual ellipsis (what is left out but assumed?)
- d) Deviance (are there elements in the picture that deviate from the wider syntagm created by the other items in the picture? (Kress and van Leeuwen, p.197))
- e) Dimensions of visual space (i.e. proportions of mass and space)
- f) Integration Codes (Is there an overarching code providing a logic of integration such as :
 - i) Code of spatial composition?
 - ii) Code of temporal composition (such as a rhythm?)

g) Non-linear Composition Factors

The concept of Materiality in this section “comprises the interrelated semiotic resources of surface, substance and tools of inscription. Each has its own semiotic effects, and in their interaction they produce complex effects of meaning” (Kress and van Leeuwen, p.241). The template must therefore request through its questions, answers to both multimodality (some brochures contain additional material within pockets in the inside cover or stapled to the centre which may differ in their materiality, i.e. inscription, typeface, design mode, paper, etc.) and materiality in terms of the brochures’ typeface, quality of paper, design style, shape and size. Having classified the prime concepts expressed by Kress and van Leeuwen we can now develop a commercial model informed by those concepts.

4. The Development and Application of a Taxonomy for Commercial Use

A format has been developed based upon the above concepts yet still suitable to meet the requirements and time pressures under which managers work. Commercial managers need systems that require a short time frame for their completion yet consistent with the cost/time equation which dominates much of an executive’s life. Alfred Tack, the founder of The Tack Organisation which claims to be the largest training organisation in the world, with twelve thousand clients in the United Kingdom, maintains that one of the tenets (Tack 1993, p.36) upon which much of their training rests is that “The office manager spends his time

dictating, attending meetings, interviewing applicants for positions, completing forms ... he, therefore, will also have little free time except during meal breaks". He goes on to say (Tack 1993, p.38) that, "It is only by evolving an interesting and compelling approach that you will make a prospect or buyer put aside what he is doing and listen." My objective therefore is to provide a process by which managers can make the viewer "put aside what he is doing and listen" by gaining fresh insights into the 'effectiveness' of their artefacts of visual communication yet not involving a process so complex and time-consuming as to negate the advantages gained from use.

It was apparent as the above checklist was developed that problems existed in relation to the format to be used for developing questions if they were based solely on the specific concepts propounded by Kress and van Leeuwen. It would be difficult to separate, for example, visual functions selected because they are available and appear to represent what the sign-maker wishes to communicate (the pattern of representation), from the effect those functions have on the viewer, what Hodge and Kress (1999, p.262) refer to as the semiotic plane where semiotic events are "linking producers and receivers and signifiers and signifieds into a significant relationship". Whereas Kress and van Leeuwen are concerned to discuss concepts under headings that posit how the signmaker selects and uses signification, the effect those signs have on the viewer (representation and interaction) and how the meta-linguistic element affected meaning (materiality), I am concerned with the effect on the viewer in *the circumstances in which that viewer*

will decode the meaning.

Kress and van Leeuwen examined the semiotic processes as elements on the road to the creation of a visual grammar. Their examination follows a logical pattern to meet that requirement. My objective is different even though the processes discussed remain the same. I needed to examine these elements with a different end purpose in view. For this reason some elements described by Kress and van Leeuwen under one procedural heading have been grouped into another because the aim of the analytical process differed from that of Kress and van Leeuwen. They (p.12) “focused on the system of visual communication rather than its uses”. In my work the classificatory requirements of commerce needed to have precedence over the requirements of the originating process because the *overriding objective of the commercial analyst is the extent to which the interaction with the viewer encourages a decoding whereby the meaning supports the requirements of corporate positioning*. This does not mean the concepts argued by Kress and van Leeuwen have been changed. They have simply been applied in such a way as to help in the understanding of how meaning is transferred within a given commercial context. In order to meet my requirements, all of which are concerned with sign-writer/viewer interaction, the questions developed within the templates have been grouped within the framework of a model familiar to working managers. That is the AIDA model which I now describe.

The AIDA Model and its Application

A commercial artefact such as a brochure, especially when used within the context of corporate communication, needs to be effective in terms of the transfer of meaning at different levels within a diachronic time frame. Unlike a text used for scientific purposes, or within the fields of literature or academia, where the user will, in the majority of cases, make a decision to view, read and then absorb the information presented, in a commercial setting the cardinal principle behind the preparation of most artefacts is to grasp the viewer's attention and hold it, albeit less so in the case of corporate literature than for marketing material. It is increasingly necessary as the quantity of information (Bogart 1967, Uris 1976) available to commercial managers increases, for the production teams concerned with printed texts (or indeed any other commercial medium whether it be sponsorship, television or the Internet), to concentrate upon the need to hold the recipient's attention for long enough to ensure the viewer becomes sufficiently involved to read the whole text and take the action (which may be that of changing attitudes or opinions and not simply a physical action) required by the sign-maker. This principle applies regardless of whether the text is linguistic, visual or a combination of both. It has become the accepted view among advertising, marketing, sales promotion and public relations executives that a sequence of responses must take place if the end user is to be motivated to remain reading and take the action required by the signmaker (Worcester 1997). The sequence commences with the need to capture the attention of target audiences in an increasingly crowded communications

environment. During an average day there are hundreds, if not thousands, of commercial or quasi commercial messages competing for an audience's individual attention. Bogart (1967) writing as far back as the sixties estimated that a member of the American public was exposed to 1500 messages a day. He argued that the better educated person, who corresponds more closely to our business target audience, "read more newspapers on a given day and read them more thoroughly and intensively. But they actually spend less time with each newspaper because they read more efficiently". Today with the explosion in the use of the Internet that exposure figure is even higher. Direct mail alone rose from 4.34 billion items (Dowdy, *Financial Times*, 8 May 2001) in 1999 to 4.66 billion in the year 2000, according to the Direct Mail Information Service. Paul Edwards (*Marketing Magazine*, 13 May 1999) comments :

There are more forms of media than ever that are providing an ever-increasing amount of information in the form of content and commercial messages ... people have more access to data than they can reasonably use. This proliferation of information, however, creates a shortage of what marketers desire, which is the attention for their brands and commercial messages. (Edwards 1999)

He goes on to say:

We spend slightly more than 61 hours a week consuming media in one form or another (including radio, TV, books, music, cinema,

computers, magazines and newspapers) and this total has hardly changed since the mid-1980s. This means the battle is on for share of attention. As in any market as it approaches saturation, we will be concentrating on the very marginal shifts in attention with the 'big wins' increasingly difficult to create". (Ibid. 1999)

To the list of media should be added that of corporate literature requested by potential viewers. The comment above regarding the battle for attention reinforces my argument concerning the need to readjust the context within which many of the concepts discussed earlier should be placed when used within a template for analysis. Stephen Hoare writing in *The Times* (3 October 2000) quotes from a report called "Taking the Strain", where the author's research "found that 43 per cent of managers felt unable to cope with their workloads". Hoare goes on to quote from Laura Nichols, a business psychologist who says, "I often see managers who feel they have more information than they can deal with. It happens in companies that believe knowledge management means sending e-mails to people." When Edwards (1999) says that there is a proliferation of "more media than ever pumping out more and more information" he makes a point relevant to the first module of AIDA, the A for attention. He says:

Yet as communicators, this proliferation of information creates a shortage of what we actually want, which is attention: attention for our brands and attention for our commercial messages. If people have to screen out more and more information merely to

survive, then the chances are that they will start with the stuff that other people want them to see, rather than the stuff they have chosen to watch themselves.

The comment concerning other people making a choice emphasises my earlier point that corporate literature is usually viewed as a result of a direct request. Even so, attention must be caught in the first place if the viewer is to continue reading. Having caught the attention of the viewer it is necessary to stimulate their interest by offering information relevant to the interests of that target cohort. The information must do more than stimulate interest, it must generate a desire to do something with the information on offer. That desire needs to be sufficient to suggest or excite the recipient into taking a specified action that may be to 'buy' the product or idea represented by the signmaker. The action may be no more than an acceptance of an idea projected with the intention of creating a change of opinion (as in the case of political communication), or a change of attitude (towards, say, smoking, the use of narcotic drugs or a suggestion to take more exercise). The chain of functions expected from a piece of sales or corporate literature by the sign-maker can be summed up as: first gain attention, then pass information, create a desire and finally stimulate a specific action which derives from the message. A similar approach to this chain of action, was propounded by Robert Worcester (1996), a leading market research practitioner, when he wrote:

There are examples of many companies whose advertising or other communications will fail, because they are not based on the sequential

building blocks of:

- Awareness: Here's who we are
- Involvement: Here's what we can do for you
- Persuasion: Here's what we think
- Action: Here's what we want you to do

The marketing and communications professions have accepted the concept of the four links in a chain but prefer to use the words Attention, Interest, Desire and Action under the initial letters of each stage. They refer to them colloquially under the mnemonic AIDA. I would suggest there is little difference between the two models because attention and awareness have an interaction which refers back to other sources of communication whereby the corporate viewers will, because they have entered into a dialogue with the company, have an awareness of the company already (Traverse-Healy and Worcester 1978). I quoted (Watts 1986, p.137) in my book from personal discussions with Worcester when I wrote that he, Worcester, arguing from more than twenty years' research in the field, considered there existed "a high correlation between familiarity and favourability" in relation to a target audience's relationship with a company. The role of the brochure as artefact is to catch and hold that attention. The other words in the Worcester model (1996) suggest exactly the same chronology of action as AIDA and for that reason I used the AIDA model which has general acceptance and understanding by communications and marketing executives. According to Alfred Tack (1993, p.33) "The first recorded sales story ... was written

by a salesman employed by the National Cash Register Company. Later it became the basis of the sequence used by all NCR salesmen. The AIDA formula became a byword in selling."

The word has reached a point of such acceptability that it is even included in management publications such as *The Pocket Manager* (Heller 1987, p.7) where the reference is:

AIDA ... is an acronym that stands for Attention, Interest, Desire, Action - these being the four stages through which the smart salesman should lead a prospect in sequence: first catching his Attention, then arousing his Interest, converting interest into Desire for the product, and then getting him to Act - preferably by signing a contract on the dotted line.

My starting point, therefore, is to identify those factors which have driven the sign-maker towards the type of visual exposition that will hold the attention of the target viewer. I have then clustered questions in terms of whether, or not, they will produce data which relates to the A, attention getting function, or A+ I where attention and interest are closely merged. This is particularly true in the case of corporate material where the need to gain attention is less than in a selling or a direct mail sales leaflet because there may well have been an approach by the viewer for information in the first place. Alfred Tack (1993, p.38) believes that where the objective is to gain attention "there is a choice of alternatives, it could be based on one of the following: a fact, a question, something to arouse curiosity, fear or a sense". There are few rules that

dictate which of the concepts under discussion would draw the attention of a viewer before others. As Cokayne (Cokayne 1991, p.25) states "people do not buy a product or service as such, they buy a means of satisfying a want which is driven by a complex set of motivations that we need to understand in detail. The product therefore, is a means to an end for the customer". He goes on to say (1991, p.25) that "consumers may well buy the same product for quite different reasons, or use different products to fulfil the same satisfaction." The only way to shed light on such behaviour which can be driven by functional performance, habit or convenience or some type of aspirational stimulus, is to ask whether they need it. In the case of corporate communications the answer is more likely to be yes because there is a greater likelihood that the target audience has approached the company for information rather than in the case of the mass consumer who may be seeing the product or its direct mail literature for the first time and the communications function needs to attract attention. As I examined the elements of social semiotics and critical discourse discussed earlier I noted the priorities laid down by Congel (Congel 1998) when he observed "several dozen" managers in company meetings and interviewed 14 managers "known for their outstanding abilities in constructive persuasion" and saw persuasion in terms of four distinct and essential steps):

First, the effective persuader establishes credibility. Second, they frame their goals in a way that identifies common ground with those they intend to persuade. Third, they reinforce their positions using vivid language and compelling evidence. And fourth, they connect emotionally

with their audience.

Alfred Tack (1993, p.38) argues against an over simplistic approach to the gaining of attention and creating interest, when he comments there are variations which must always be noted:

To a salesman who is extremely well known to his customer, confidence building need only be a reminder of the wide publicity the new product is receiving ... if a salesman is unknown to the prospect, then he will have to introduce confidence building a little earlier ... the logical sequence, therefore, will be approach and create interest, offer the main benefit, then offer the subsidiary benefit.

An accurate list of factors that gain the immediate attention of a viewer can only be prepared if data for a particular situation is generated by means of market research. As Willis (1990) says:

Signs as signifiers no longer simply connect with what is signified in intentional messages ... taken together and modified through informal work and creativity, received signs can signify in new ways to find signifieds of their own, almost turning back the one-way flow of communication to make 'the hearer speak'.

Willis comments (1990, p.128) " There is now a whole social and cultural medium of interwebbing common meaning and identity-making which blunts, deflects, minces up or transforms outside or top down

communication", which suggests to me that even greater emphasis must be placed on the *visual attention-getting* elements within any item of corporate literature. However, certain factors listed above by Tack (1993) and Congel (1998) as being those which draw immediate as opposed to considered attention to a text or, in my case picture, do correlate with certain Kress and van Leeuwen concepts. In the Tack list (1993) elements such as 'Fact' relate to the criterial factors within a picture. Fear and Sense (as an emotion) can be met by the manner in which participants gaze, or not, towards the viewer which in relation to the criterial factors would meet the Tack requirement.

Similarly, words used by Congel (1998) such as 'Credibility' and 'Expertise' are techniques available to the sign-maker through the use of technical drawings, exposure of engine parts (in the case of the automotive industry) and fore-grounding of criterial elements. The concept of finding 'Common Ground' and an 'Emotional Connection' can be met through social semiotic signifiers which carry iconic signification. The need for what Congel (1998) calls 'vivid language' is available in visual terms through the use of colour, a factor discussed in the following section.. All such elements which are considered by marketing writers as being important in the commercial area of 'catching attention' are available in a translated (from writing to the visual) form for the signmaker. One area where sufficient research has been carried out to argue with some justification its validity, is the use of colour and its immediate impact on the end viewer. Unpublished work carried out on behalf of myself and my client Wace PLC by corporate colour consultant

Gorgiana van Walsham forms the basis of the following comments and from which she has given permission to quote. She has drawn upon the work of Hope and Walch (1990), Nassau (1998), Kuehni (1997), Holtzchue (1995), Gouras (1991), Sloane (1989), Klinker (1993) et al. At the head of her unpublished report to Wace PLC, van Walsham makes this statement:

Marketing psychologists advise that a lasting colour impression is made within ninety seconds and accounts for sixty percent of the acceptance or rejection of an object, place, individual or circumstance. Because colour impressions are both quickly made and long-held, decisions regarding colour can be highly important to success.

Later in her report van Walsham comments that:

As those within the commercial world become increasingly scientifically literate, there is a move towards a recognition of the power of colour beyond the purely aesthetic. Colour can be used as an effective shorthand for conveying the values of a company and associating its services and products. It can be used to persuade and motivate, to convince and persuade, to induce trust or create excitement.

She goes on to say that “when used effectively, colour can attract the eye and attention of the consumer. Upon encountering the brand, the consumer will immediately respond to the identifying colour, often before

they have time to notice the words.” It is interesting within this context to note the emphasis on the visual over words. Of equal importance is her comment, also from her unpublished report that “psychological studies have shown that the use of colour is not only effective in attracting attention, but also in enhancing recall. People tend to have a more effective memory for colour in images and writing than for those in black and white.”

Richard Gregory made an additional point verbally at the Dennis Rosen Memorial Lecture at the Royal Institution (28 June 2001) when he said that “colour changes its meaning according to context”, a significant factor in regard to commercial texts. He went on to say, during the question period in the lecture, that “perceptions of colour are not precise” and that “we respect certain colours because they were important in evolutionary terms in helping us determine whether food is edible or an attack from other animals is likely due to animals changing colour ... colour increases our knowledge of objects.”

This leads me to comment on the colour red which we find later when analysing the Rover brochures where it is used repetitively to attract or hold attention or to signify semiotic meaning. Jakobson (1968) argues that primary colours have a meaning similar to that of vowels and they suggest strength or weakness. He specifically mentions red as corresponding to a high energy vowel (significant when later I deconstruct the use of a red sports car on the cover of one Rover brochure). Hodge and Kress (1999, p.104) quote the sixties fashion

designer Mary Quant (1984) who “ sees red as expressing raw energy: hard, hot, alive, sure, pushy and crude, blood and guts, cruel, sex ... and it always works.” It is important to note such comments when we see how sign-makers use red to establish the position (perspective) of the viewer in relation to the double page of a brochure seen at ‘first glance’. Bearing in mind these arguments, colour is clearly one where emphasis should be placed early in the questioning process. I have already mentioned how the material used as the conduit for visual meaning is more likely to act as a signifier signifying meaning immediately on contact with the viewer because of its physicality.

Every engagement between a corporate artefact and an end-user will be different and defined according to the *a priori* discourse within which the user moves, the socio-cultural pressures which bear down and the immediate purpose and needs driving that engagement. The attention factor in the AIDA process, for example, is more difficult to achieve when the primary function is to obtain sales. The customer may not at that moment of primary contact be interested in the message on offer. For that reason sign-makers frequently need to resort to a dramatic use of signifiers to gain attention when using perhaps a direct mail shot or working within the context of a supermarket. At corporate level, however, there is a more subtle, a more complex interaction created by the matrix of processes. This does not mean the attention gaining process does not require the same level of analysis as with a sales brochure, but it does suggest we should be aware of semiotic functions that may come into play at first viewing and those which are more likely to be decoded

later within a more considered environment. We are thus working, as I have argued earlier, within a different objectival framework to that used by Kress and van Leeuwen in their book. Below I restate the classification listed earlier (pp.50-64) in a format which takes account of the AIDA objectives. I have grouped those elements most likely to be seen or noted first, such as the materiality factors where its physicality is immediately apparent and noted by the viewer, whereas elements concerned with the totality of the meaning such as narrative and contextuality and its interaction with the viewer are grouped at a later more considered stage in the analytical process.

I have used the words Attention and Interest as headings for the first two groups within my model but merged the Desire and Action links in the AIDA chain into one heading to form a final stage. The reason is that action need not be physical. The desire to change may be no more than a change of attitude or opinion which although an action, is impossible to isolate in the psychological change without separate and discrete research as a single case study. In corporate communication the end objective may be to adjust an attitude to a company or to view it in a different manner (Dowling 1994, Mallinson 1996, Mandelson 1996, Ind 1997, Morley 1998, Bose, 1998, Nash 1999). This may be action enough and meet the objectives of the communications department. The physical action of visiting the company, writing about it if the viewer is a journalist, or recommending its products if a distributor, may come very much later. The important action in corporate terms is the change of attitude, a process that becomes merged into the stimulation of desire (the 'D' of

AIDA). This is a further example of where corporate communication differs from marketing and sales communication where there is an objective to achieve the sale of the product. A brochure or any other commercial literature may arrive in the hands of the target recipient by post or from a company representative at a point of sale meeting. The recipient will glance at the product quickly and if the 'attention' gained is strong enough may either read it then or put the text aside for consideration later. At a second stage (Interest) a further examination is made of the brochure, possibly with more care, reading parts of the text which 'catch the interest' but more likely as a result of 'glancing' again at the visual elements. Hence the importance of identifying the early impact of the visual. If sufficient 'interest' is aroused it is likely the recipient will read more slowly and if the 'desire' is created consider whether to take further 'action'.

The three stages of my model vary, therefore, according to the interactive environment involving the relationship between the sign-maker and the representative of the company that publishes the brochure and who uses it to transfer its meaning into the format for a meaning transfer with a third party. In this process there are variations in the power relationships of critical discourse. During the interaction, power will change from the superordinate to the subordinate participants and back again as the discussion proceeds. In the first instance the end viewer (perhaps a potential customer, a journalist, a financial analyst, a corporate investor, or a parliamentarian) may have instigated the dialogue because of a need for information. The company representative

or the artefact produced by that company moves into a superordinate position as the supplier of the information required. Sometimes, as in the case of a potential sale, media coverage, investment, or government changes in legislation, the superordinate role moves along a chain from company representative to enquirer and back again. Different elements in the critical discourse and semiotic relationship come into play, as the words used in the verbal exchange, the body language of each participant, the intensity of desire by the third party, all add a sequence of signifier/signified slippages as meanings become distorted. I have attempted to take account of these different levels of 'reading' intensity in the restructuring of selected elements of the original checklist. Where there is doubt as to which factors come into play during the interaction I have moved the item and its corresponding question forward to the first or second stage of the AIDA interaction. The recipient will, if attention has been gained at the first reading, either decode again but with a different emphasis on second reading as information gained informs the second process, or the original decode will be reinforced by "cautious reading" (Edwards 1999, p.24). Questions regarding salience, contextuality, ellipsis, dimensions and non-compositional influence, because they are less likely to resonate when the viewer is reading quickly or only 'glancing' at first sight in a showroom, have been included within the third section. It is then that the reader/viewer's interest may be gained and is more likely to concentrate attention within the context of a full examination. The elements that reinforce, add to or delete from earlier meanings but only transfer meaning after a slower more considered analysis (Desire-Action) possibly at a different time or place

from the initial point of contact with the company or its agents, have been positioned in the last section. The template structure which follows and which is later developed into a questionnaire has been developed in such a way as to meet the aims of an AID(A) model.

ANALYTICAL CLASSIFICATION

1. Attention

- a) Identify Signifiers/Signifieds, their causal relationships and whether there are stages in the use of metaphor.

- b) The Linear Structure of Representation:

Linearity and Narrative Sequence and Action

- i) Identify Interactive Participants and their Vectoring (actor, goal, and transaction. Also identify where actor acts on goal then becomes goal. Note if there is a 'relay' whereby there is an extension of the meaning)
- ii) What are Represented Participants (people, places and things in the picture? They can also be abstract concepts which could be the subject about which the images are being produced.)

- iii) Implied Interactive Participants who silently instruct viewer through design of picture. The interaction between viewer and participants within the context of the AIDA model are of primary importance during this early stage of the process and need analysis early within the process.
- iv) Carrier and Possessive Attributes. (How do the participants fit together to make a larger statement? Some analytical pictures will contain neither vector nor narrative process. The picture will identify a carrier but allow viewers to scrutinise the carriers possessive attributes. There is usually a low degree of modality because background is plain or out of focus. Their purpose is still interactional but the interaction is with the viewer.)
- v) Does Vectoring lead the eye through tilting, repetition of colour, framing by different styles of photography or drawing, or use of depicted elements such as structure of buildings to lead the eye?
- vi) Note Subordinate and Superordinate Participants. Is there a 'covert taxonomy' where superordinate is

only indicated in accompanying text?

- vii) Participant Demands (Image/Viewer Relationship/Offer)
- viii) Trace vectors and transactions (NB eye-line reactions and 'circumstances of means', i.e. tools and user becoming one)
- ix) Process of Change (the 'given' and the 'new').
- x) Transitory Spatial Arrangement/Concept (yes/no)
whether participant is a generalised essence of:

Class

Structure

Meaning

Is the Linearity (position of one object in relation to another):

- xi) Spatial?

Locative?

left/right,

top/bottom,

centre/margin. Does centre unify the information or provide meaning from which the surrounding elements draw their own meaning?

Is there a 'locative circumstance' which relates other participants to a specific participant in a setting?

xii) Reading Paths

xiii) Motion (i.e. cat climbs tree)

xiv) Co-operative

xv) Social (Interactive process between Participants)

Multimodality and Materiality refer to the typeface, the quality of paper, the shape/size of text and the variety of each used for the brochure. (Kress and van Leeuwen originally saw materiality as a separate group for the purposes of their discussion but I iterate my argument that the material upon which the visual text is produced has an immediate signifying effect upon the person handling the brochure due to its physicality. Its role as an early signifier is therefore analysed at this point.)

c) Colour, as discussed earlier has an 'attention' gaining effect (van Walsum) on the first-time viewer/reader. For this reason it has

been listed early under ‘attention’:

- Colour Saturation (scale full colour saturation to absence of colour)
- Colour Differentiation (scale maximum range to monochrome)
- Colour Modulation (scale full modulation to plain unmodulated)
- Contextualisation (scale absence of background to full articulation/detail. Note level of degrees of focus, muddy dark background, etc.)
- Representation (scale maximum abstraction to maximum representation of pictorial detail)
- Depth in perspective (scale from absence of depth to maximum deep perspective)
- Illumination (scale full play of light/shade to absence)
- Brightness (scale maximum degrees of brightness to black and white)

d) Viewer Perspective (subjective/objective including position of viewer as invisible onlooker becomes an early signifier of meaning):

Demand	...	...	...	...	gaze at the viewer
Offer	...	...	...	...	absence of gaze at the viewer
Intimate/personal	...	...	...	...	close shot

Social	...	...	...	...	medium shot
Impersonal	...	...	...	...	long shot
Involvement	...	...	...	...	frontal angle
Detachment	...	...	...	...	oblique angle
Viewerpower	...	...	...	...	high angle
Equality	...	...	...	...	eye level
Represented participant power				...	low angle

Line and Framing (note that the stronger the framing the more separate the unit of representation).

e) Criterial Factors:

- Cultural, (signmaker in socio-economic terms)
- Power relationship, (signmaker to viewer)
- History of the sign / tradition of use
- Icon and symbol usage, symbol attribute may have salience through placement, focus or colour, be pointed at, look out of place, or by convention. Human participants usually pose for view rather than be involved in some action.
- Contextual (including layout), role of carrier

Representation of :

- Detail,
- Depth

Tonal shades (scale from absence to maximum)

2. Interest

- a) Identify if and how People, Places Things, combine into a meaningful whole which is/is not an extension of the signified meaning transferred from the individual objects in the picture.

(This question has been included under the second or Interest chronological stage because any transfer of meaning from individual items working unisemically as a cluster within the picture is unlikely to occur at 'first glance'. It will more probably be decoded at a second more considered reading of the text.)

- b) Unisemic or polysemic: Guiraud (1975 Ibid. pp.11-12) makes the point that:

There are three types of code according to whether the signs stand in a logical relation: that of exclusion, inclusion or intersection. These correspond, respectively, to the diacritical (distinctive), taxonomic (classificatory) and, semantic (signifying) function.

(For the same reasons as those argued above, this section is more relevant if seen as a process of meaning transfer which takes place

on considered reading):

- Diacritical
- Taxonomic
- Lexical

(see Figure 5)

Note different meanings and their interaction created through multi-modality by interrelated systems:

Informative Value. Placement of elements (participants and syntagms that relate them to each other and viewer) endows them with informational value attached to the 'zones' of the image: left and right, top and bottom, centre and margin.

Salience. Elements (participants and representational/interactive syntagms) that attract viewers to different degrees, as realised by placement in the foreground or background, relative size, contrasts in tonal value (or colour), differences in sharpness, etc. by:

- Size
- Focus
- Tonal contrast (i.e. borders between black and white, for example)
- Placement and visual weights

- Colour contents (saturated versus soft colours)
- Human faces or cultural symbols

Framing. Presence or absence of framing (elements which create dividing lines, or actual frame lines) disconnects or connects elements of the image.

c) Integration of Different Semiotic Codes: Is there an overarching code providing a logic of integration such as:

- Code of spatial composition, i.e. texts where all elements are spatially co-present, such as painting, magazine pages, etc?
- Code of temporal composition in which texts unfold over time such as in speech, drama, opera? Although there can be an integrative principle through an overall rhythm.

d) Locative Circumstances and Relationships:

- Foregrounding
- Backgrounding
- Is there foregrounding to create stress/contrast
- Is locative function realised by overlap, gradient of focus, colour saturation
- Angles, curves and other geometrics.

e) Social Meaning through Coding Interaction by discrete Social Groups and Orientation regarding Modality:

- Technological coding where concern is visual representation as a blueprint.
- Sensory coding is where the pleasure principle is dominant as in art, fashion, cooking. The coding is the source of pleasure and therefore conveys high modality
- Abstract coding is used by elites talking to other elites
- Naturalistic norm is where coding is the generally accepted norm.

Text selects a model reader through its choice of code, style and assumption of a specific competence. What is the social meaning of the picture and are there exclusions of other viewers because of its choice?

3. Desire/Action

- a) Social Deixis. (Note here any references as a result of the context of the socially identified visual articulations that identify the trade-off between a discrete social cultural group and by so doing refer back to the addresser. This complex set of socially driven influences would only transfer meaning, consciously or unconsciously, during a considered reading. It has, therefore, been included under the final stage in the interactive chain.)

- b) Relationship between text and visual (their interaction? Which comes first?)
- c) Visual ellipsis (what is left out but assumed)
- d) Deviance. As result of cultural classification systems there may be deviance on the part of the reader who may refuse to be part of the community defined by the sign- producing paradigm.
- e) Dimensions of visual space (i.e. proportions of mass and space)
- f) Non-linear compositional factors (i.e. readers may read magazine from back to front, fall into their own reading patterns. Is the non-linear composition created by the producers for their own agendas?)

One effect of this model is to ensure the *analyst accepts a similar time frame diachronically to that of the viewer*. It is interesting that Kress and van Leeuwen make a similar point concerning the stages through which a reader may pass when decoding meaning. They write in the context of newspaper layout saying that:

within our broad social semiotic framework, we treat front pages as (complex) signs, which invite and require an initial reading as one sign. This initial reading is then followed by a more detailed,

specific reading, which draws its initial orientation from the first reading of the large sign.

The methodology I use is reductionist in the sense that the smallest analytical unit demands a response from the communications analyst. In some cases the response required is a score on a 1-5 scale against listed criteria, or to insert a yes/no answer. In mainstream market research scoring systems are primarily concerned with the use of ratcheted subjective scales of a 'low to high', 'bad to good' sequence, with a numerical marking. In my case the scale is intended when used under the modality marker module, to provide a graduated statement of fact as perceived by the viewer. There is an underlying intention which is to quantify the possible subjectivity of the responses to identify situations where the analyst can debate responses with colleagues on a metric scale. For example, a question under modality markers may be "score colour saturation from full colour to absence of colour", or under locative relationships "score the strength of the foregrounding from strong to weak on a score of 1-5". In a later chapter where I discuss my analysis of the Rover Group brochures, comparative criteria is based on data obtained through face-to-face interviews. A system of quantification whereby the number of signifying items is calculated, has therefore been used with caution because it could lead to an appearance of mathematical precision when the figures in reality are based on subjective assessment. Such subjectivity occurs not only at the time of analysis but also

during later stages where weighting systems are sometimes used by market research practitioners to show the importance, or the perceived psychological impact, of one element over another and decisions are taken upon those metrics. This approach should be used with care. Does, for example, the degree of colour saturation outweigh that of focus and detail in terms of emphasising visual salience? Should changes be made in the pictorial content as a result? Such problems exist not only in the field of visual communication. The French philosopher Derrida is quoted by Christopher Norris (1987, p.15) when he writes "in Derrida's view, meaning is nowhere punctually present in language, that it is always subject to a kind of semantic slippage which prevents the sign from ever coinciding with itself ... " He and the post-structuralists have argued that ambiguities exist in all linguistic writing and speech and although such ambiguities are not strictly due to subjectivity in observation, their writings point up the difficulties of obtaining accuracy during any form of meaning transfer whether it is linguistic or visual.

Before applying the above classification to the Rover brochures, where the objective is to analyse the whole brochure, not just one visual aspect of it, I pilot tested the questions against a single example taken from the automotive industry but from a different manufacturer, the Toyota Annual Report 1995 (p.13) There is a colour illustration of the page shown on following page marked Illustration A. The responses provided data concerning the



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“Every encounter with a customer is a chance to make a sale,”

enthuses Katsumi

Hashimoto, a service

manager at a Toyota dealership in Tokyo.

“Maintenance and repair work is as important for us as selling vehicles. It’s a great opportunity to cement ties with customers who bought their cars from us. It’s also a chance to win over customers who bought their cars elsewhere.”

Toyota dealers in Japan are working systematically to raise efficiency in filling customer orders for cars and also in providing maintenance, repair, and inspection services. They are borrowing readily from the Toyota Production System:

- implementing just-in-time principles to trim

inventories and respond promptly to customer needs,

- standardizing work procedures to pro-

vide a basis for continuing improvements,

- distributing work evenly through the day and week to make optimal use of personnel and equipment.

Those measures are speeding turnaround time for customers and raising profitability for the dealers.

“We built a sales-and-service network that was second to none—as long as the market kept expanding,” observes executive vice president Hiroshi Okuda. “But Japan’s market has matured. We now must deal with a pattern of alternating upturns and downturns. Our dealers and we have got to come up with more-efficient ways to sell and service cars.”

structure and the question format that later informed my visual analysis of other brochures. In addition, from the commercial standpoint it could be used for comparison with artefacts using a similar format but with different objectives such as point of sale material or sponsored literature. In the pilot test on the Toyota photograph the data has been assembled at the end of the test under the headings of a first and a second order of meaning. The use of the phrase first order of meaning is an extension of Barthes' (1964, p.58) use of the phrase to describe the immediate effect of a signifier signifying a meaning, whereas his second order of meaning refers to the association of the first order with social and semiotic codes which suggest a further underlying signified. Culler refers to this use of the phrase when he writes of Barthes' example in the fashion industry:

Barthes discovers three levels of signification, nicely illustrated by a couple of examples: *Les imprimés triomphent aux courses* (Prints win at the races) and *Une petite ganse fait l'élégance* (Slim piping is striking). At the level of what Barthes calls the 'vestimentary code', the code of what is fashionable, prints and piping are signifiers whose signified is fashionable. At a second level, the joining together of prints and races suggests the appropriateness of these dresses in a certain social milieu. (Culler 1990, p.70)

The meaning transfer that occurs when the viewer first decodes the visual communication, I term 'first order of meaning'. This is

SUMMARY OF MEANING LEVELS

All within a meta-language of, for example,

INSTITUTIONAL MEDIATION OPINION –
LEADERS:

i.e. Professional Bodies
(CBI, IPR, CIM)

Business Groups
(Automotive industry)

Business Training
(Management school, company training)

MEANING LEVEL GUIDE	DESCRIPTION OF MEANING LEVELS
GRAMMAR	MENU ITSELF.
SYNTACTICAL SLOT(S)	SOUPS, SALADS, APPETIZERS.
PARADIGM CLASS	CONTRASTING ITEMS THAT CAN FILL THE SLOTS, I.E. WHICH SOUP OR ENTRE
CONVENTION	THE SYNTACTICAL ORDER, I.E. SOUP BEFORE ENTRE, FOLLOWED BY SWEET.....
SECOND ORDER OF MEANING	HAMBURGERS HAVE A SECOND ORDER OF MEANING OVER ROAST PHEASANT.

N.B. AUDIENCE ALSO HAS A PLURALITY OF OTHER TEXTS, CODES, WHOSE ORIGINS MAY BE LOST.

FIGURE 6B

SUMMARY OF MEANING LEVELS

META-LANGUAGE SUMMARY (Including institutional Mediating Op. Leaders)		MEANING LEVEL GUIDE	DESCRIPTION OF MEANING LEVELS
THE META-LANGUAGE IS:		GRAMMAR	BROCHURE: FULL COLOUR 16 PAGES plus hard cover 6¾ x 8¼VISUALS (photographs) AND TEXT.
i) MORES OF CORPORATE LIFE ii) BUSINESS SUCCESS ASSOCIATED with MONEY, which buys iii) VISIBLE SIGNS OF THAT SUCCESS of which iv) HOUSE, CLOTHES, ACCESSORIES & ABOVE ALL MOTOR VEHICLES, v) SUCCESS BACK TO OTHER PEOPLE living a CORPORATE ABC, LIFE-STYLE vi) THE HOLISTIC PROCESS UNDER CONSTANT REINFORCEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT through advertising, life-style editorial in print and televisual media plus one-to-one conversation vii)			
		SYNTACTICAL SLOT(S)	PHOTOGRAPHS DRAWING (the World) HEADINGS & GRAPHIC FURNITURE COATED PAPER & HARD
		PARADIGM CLASS	CHOICE OF PRODUCTS (MGF then rover 400 for later editions) CHOICE OF VISUAL POSITIONS FOR PRODUCTS CHOICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING Use of linguistics to re-inforce, explain visuals.
		CONVENTION	COVER TO ESTABLISH ATTENTION – in sales literature it would be a PHATIC “WOW” FACTOR. Reader drawn into second order of meaning Release reader back to primary SR Establish total Life-style transaction
		SECOND ORDER OF MEANING	Although viewer needs car for transport, second order of meaning ‘is a desire to’ express personal success to friends, family thro a constructed life-style

N.B. AUDIENCE ALSO HAS A PLURALITY OF OTHER TEXTS, CODES, WHOSE ORIGINS MAY BE LOST.

what Barthes calls in the above context the “vestimentary code”. My ‘second order of meaning’, is what Culler (1990, p.70) refers to as a second level of signification. I use it in the context of the likely association of the signifieds or meanings with other codes the viewer will take from the information *after* first contact. See Figure 6a and 6b on the following page which illustrate a range of meaning levels and their integration into possible metalanguage codes that become a part of the accepted viewer’s decoding process. In the quotation above Barthes is not considering the situation in which a transference of meaning may take place. He is simply identifying levels of signification. By isolating these two levels they provide tools which meet the criteria whereby the viewer will decode meaning at different points in the text/viewer time relationship. An example would be in my pilot test where I refer to the presence of a participant in the illustration as being from an ABC1 socio-economic group due to the clothes he is wearing. This is the first order of meaning. Due to the positioning of other participants in the picture and their own associations which add to the overall meaning through the visual setting, a second order of meaning occurs which suggests a type of ‘success’ lifestyle through the presence and position of the saloon car and its association with the clothes of the superordinate participant. I have included a third column in the table of summarised data from my interrogation, which I term The ‘interpreted summary of meaning’. This column refers to the meaning the reader is likely to decode from the visual communication after more considered



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“Every encounter with a customer is a chance to make a sale,” enthuses Katsumi Hashimoto, a service manager at a Toyota dealership in Tokyo.

“Maintenance and repair work is as important for us as selling vehicles. It’s a great opportunity to cement ties with customers who bought their cars from us. It’s also a chance to win over customers who bought their cars elsewhere.”

Toyota dealers in Japan are working systematically to raise efficiency in filling customer orders for cars and also in providing maintenance, repair, and inspection services. They are borrowing readily from the Toyota Production System:

- implementing just-in-time principles to trim

inventories and respond promptly to customer needs,

- standardizing work procedures to pro-

vide a basis for continuing improvements,

- distributing work evenly through the day and week to make optimal use of personnel and equipment.

Those measures are speeding turnaround time for customers and raising profitability for the dealers.

“We built a sales-and-service network that was second to none—as long as the market kept expanding,” observes executive vice president Hiroshi Okuda. “But Japan’s market has matured. We now must deal with a pattern of alternating upturns and downturns. Our dealers and we have got to come up with more-efficient ways to sell and service cars.”

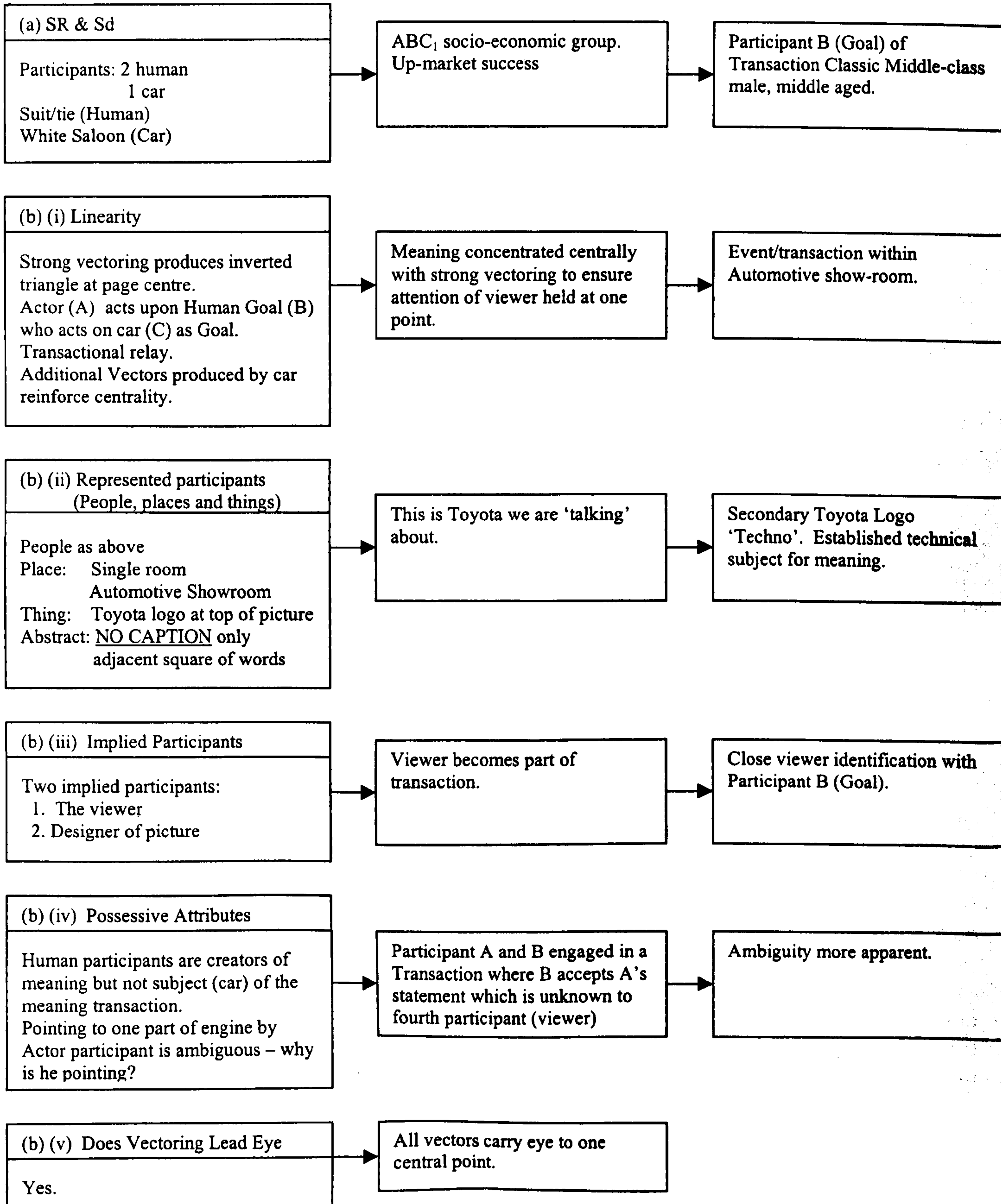
SUMMARISED MEANING FLOW

RESPONSE

FIRST ORDER OF MEANING

SECOND ORDER OF MEANING

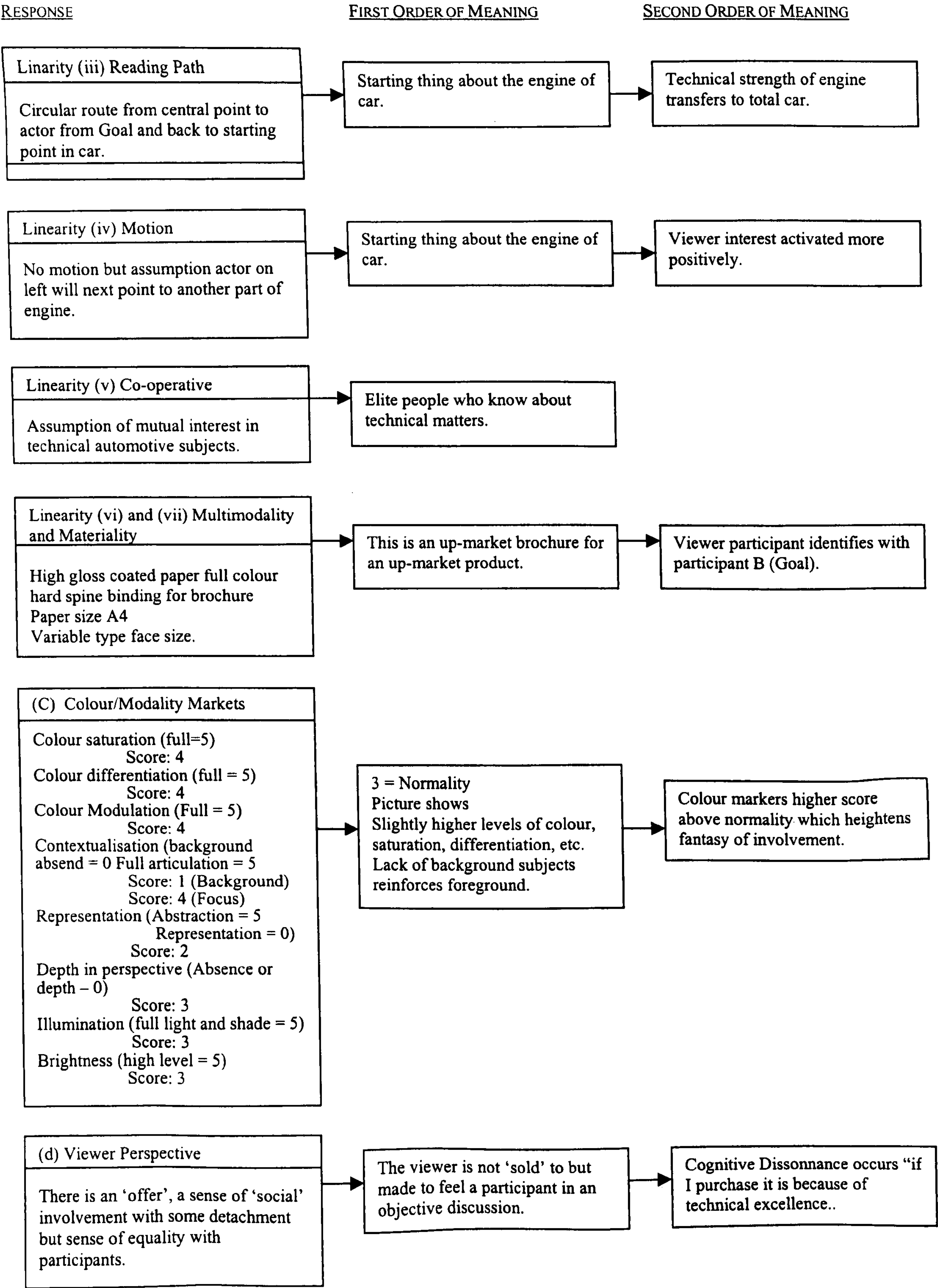
1. ATTENTION

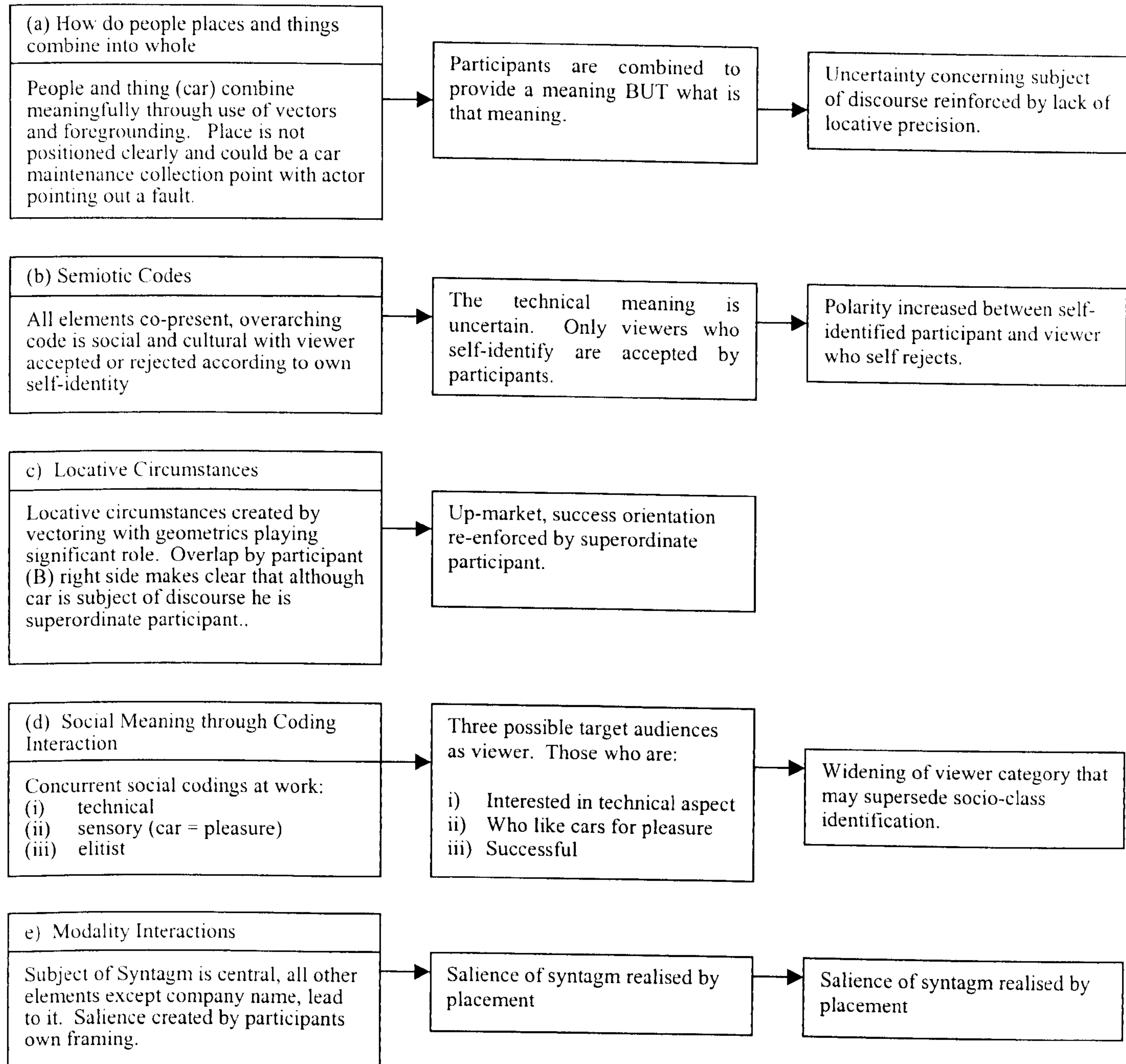


SUMMARISED MEANING FLOW

RESPONSE	FIRST ORDER OF MEANING	SECOND ORDER OF MEANING
1. ATTENTION (CON'D)		
<div>(B) (vi) Subordinate and Superordinate Participants</div> <div>Although no direct caption accompanying statements refer to sales. Therefore assume actor on left is salesperson. Thus his position at first appears superordinate but in fact the goal of his gaze is superordinate as customer.</div>	There is an interaction between superordinate participant and subordinate participant.	Socio-cultural positioning of participant A and relationship to participant B apparent.
<div>(b) (vii) Participant Demand</div> <div>Viewer Part. Receives no direct demand.</div>	Involvement of implied participant in a technical discussion in which both other participants agree is a 'demand'.	
<div>(b) (viii) Circumstances of Means</div> <div>Pen in hand of actor provides icon of authority.</div>	Salesman acquires authority.	
<div>(b) (ix) Processing of Changing</div> <div>Left side actor part. Established as 'The Given', the right side goal is 'The New'.</div>	Salesman is passing meaning to 'new' who accepts.	Participant C (Viewer) identifies with participant B or rejects.
<div>(b) (x) Essence of Class and Meaning</div> <div>Classic formal clothes for human, car is white, shining saloon.</div>	Essence of Meaning is up market life style.	Purchase of car will create or enhance viewer lifestyle.
<div>Linearity (i) Spatial</div> <div>Tightly spaced through vectoring.</div>	Sense of Single purpose of picture.	
<div>Linarity (ii) Locative</div> <div>Left to right, right to centre.</div>	Meaning moves, i.e. is action oriented.	
<div>Linarity (iii) Top/Bottom</div> <div>Toyota names at top to centre.</div>	This is about Toyota.	

SUMMARISED MEANING FLOW



SUMMARISED MEANING FLOWRESPONSEFIRST ORDER OF MEANINGSECOND ORDER OF MEANING2. INTEREST

SUMMARISED MEANING FLOW

RESPONSE	FIRST ORDER OF MEANING	SECOND ORDER OF MEANING
3. <u>DESIRE/ACTION</u>		
<div><div>(a) Social Deixis</div><div>Direct reference to upper socio-economic audience refers to comfortable life-style. This is the ICON to achieve that.</div></div>	<div>Buying Toyota re-enforces your <u>ALREADY</u> comfortable life-style.</div>	
<div><div>b) Saliency</div><div>See earlier response.</div></div>	<div>See earlier.</div>	
<div><div>(c) Relationship of Text to Visual</div><div>Previous pages of text below picture refer to sales organisation and dealerships. Pictures meaning reliant on text.</div></div>	<div>No additional meaning given to text.</div>	<div>'Efficiency of Sales' does not create additional meaning to visual.</div>
<div><div>(d) Visual Ellipsis</div><div>What is left out is any reference to why one part of engine has been selected with such precision. Too great a visual ellipsis.</div></div>	<div>Why is viewer looking at this part of engine.</div>	<div>Ellipsis suggests mood associations rather than precise meaning.</div>
<div><div>(e) Deviance</div><div>Exclusion of wealthy target audiences who reject formal classical life-styles, i.e. top music, design, academics, etc.</div></div>	<div>A growing potential target audience rejected.</div>	
<div><div>(f) Dimensions of Visual Space</div><div>foregrounding of Participants and their size ensures few other markers thus increasing ambiguity of picture because the room's usage is not defined.</div></div>	<div>Ambiguous location</div>	
<div><div>(g) non-Linear Compositional Factors</div><div>ABC₁ socio-economic group. Up-market success</div></div>	<div>Close examination of picture increases ambiguity.</div>	

analysis. A second illustration of the photograph in black and white, showing selected vectoring lines is shown as Illustration B on next page. I here test my pilot questionnaire on a photograph from the Toyota Annual Report (1995, p.13).

ANALYTICAL CLASSIFICATION

1. Attention

- a) Identify Signifiers/Signifieds, their causal relationships and whether there are stages in the use of metaphor. Signifieds to be entered as section within commentary at end of questionnaire.

Response: The following signifiers are apparent on viewing the photograph on page 13 of the Toyota Annual Report 1995:

- Two human figures (for descriptions see later questions)
- White (for tone of white see later) Toyota Saloon with raised bonnet showing black engine
- Toyota name in red on rear display wall plus a red-with-white flash, heart-shaped logo with word Techno in close proximity
- Clipboard in hand, half held under arm by one participant who is also holding a pen
- Same participant in white shirt, no coat
- Second participant in dark suit, blue shirt
- Both participants wear dark ties. Tie on participant without

coat held in place by tie clip

- In meta linguistic terms, headed later Materiality, the page is heavy gloss coated paper in full colour. (see later question for colour signification)
- The background display panel performs framing role (see later question)

b) The Linear Structure of Representation.

Linearity and Narrative Sequence and Action

Identify interactive participants and their vectoring (actor, goal, recipient and the transaction also identify where actor acts on goal then becomes goal. Note if there is a 'relay' whereby there is an extension of the meaning).

Response: The picture represents two males leaning over the raised bonnet of a car. One male is pointing with his pen to a part in the engine while looking at the second male.

The elements are arranged symmetrically against a neutral background.

Reading from left to right (from the 'given', or the 'authority' (see earlier descriptions of these terms)) the actor is acting upon the engine (the goal) which is a synecdoche or metonym of the

whole, which is the car and the car is a metonym for the Toyota company. The car, by the process Kress and van Leeuwen term 'relay', extends the meaning of the act of pointing to add further attributes to the car itself. The engine then becomes the actor (see earlier definitions of these terms as used by Kress and van Leeuwen) which forms a transaction with the second male as goal. There is thus a double transaction taking place which is immediately apparent to the viewer who is invited to assume a detached scrutiny.

There are a number of vectors which appear to control the meaning. They are:

The gaze of the left side human figure which 'eyeballs' the second. Thus demanding the goals full attention.

The left arm of the actor on left is pointing to a part in the engine which creates a vector that meets a vector which runs from the eyes of the goal male who is looking at the point at which the left side male is touching. There is thus an inverted triangle formed by a vector from the top of the heads of the two humans which continues to its apex at the point where the arm of one meets the eye-line of the second.

A number of equally important vectors are apparent. The bodies of the two humans form two opposite sides of a rectangle joined

by the front edge of the bonnet. The fourth side of the rectangle opposite the bonnet is closed by the bottom edge of the picture.

The central concentration is further reinforced by two vectors formed by the underside of the car, this leads the eye to the central bottom point of the picture and by the roof of the car leading the eye into the central rectangle.

Further vectoring establishes a sense of framing which is discussed under that heading later.

- ii) What are represented participants (people, places and things in the picture? They can also be abstract concepts which could be a subject about which the images are being produced).

Response: The represented participants are:

People: Two males, the younger aged between twenty and twenty-five and an older, aged between thirty and forty years. The generational interaction is significant in terms of the power relationship and the corporate image projected.

Places: A single room, possibly an automotive showroom.

Things: From top-down the name of the manufacturer Toyota is carried in large sans serif lettering the same depth as, for example,

the heads of the human participants. A secondary logo of a heart accompanying the words Techno in same type face but half the size. A saloon car with bonnet up, a clipboard, a pen/pencil, and a tie clip.

Abstract concepts: The picture carries no caption except words in white reversed out on blue rectangle carrying the words "We're squeezing waste and inventory out of our sales operations, just like Toyota has been doing at its plants for years". This quasi caption appears to relate through its adjacent positioning in the text yet does not relate to the contents of the picture nor to the actions of the participants.

- iii) Implied interactive participants who silently instruct viewer through design of picture.

Response: There are two implied participants. The first reinforces the central concentration of meaning because the viewer becomes the third or implied participant drawn into the transaction as an observer. The second is the designer of the picture who has used vectoring to hold the attention of the viewer in one place.

- iv) Carrier and possessive attributes. (how do the participants fit together to make a larger statement. Some analytical pictures will contain neither vector nor narrative process. The picture will identify a carrier but allow viewers to scrutinise the carriers

possessive attributes. There is usually a low degree of modality because background is plain or out of focus. Their purpose is still interactional but the interaction is with the viewer)

Response: The human participants are not the primary subject of the meaning process but the creators of the meaning through their concentration on the third participant which is the car. Without the human presence it would simply be a car with a raised bonnet. Even the pointing of one human Participant to a part of the engine could be to point to a fault or a problem. This possibility is removed by the smile on the face of the goal human participant whose stance of relaxed concentration shows him to be impressed and not concerned by the action of the actor who despite his youth has an assured air of confidence created by that symbol of management efficiency, a clipboard. The fact he does not wear a coat establishes his 'hands on' approach to his work.

- v) Does vectoring lead the eye through tilting, repetition of colour, framing by different styles of photography or drawing, or use of depicted elements such as structure of buildings to lead the eye.

Response: As stated above, the vectoring leads the eye through framing which in the case of the primary vector, the left side human's arm is white (his shirt) against the black of the engine.

- vi) Note subordinate and superordinate participants. (Is there a

'covert taxonomy' where superordinate is only indicated in accompanying text?)

Response: Although there is no covert taxonomy in the accompanying text we must assume that as its subject is sales the right side human is a customer and could therefore be referred to socio-culturally as the superordinate participant. At the viewer's first glance the superordinate participant is the left side human who is pointing, looking serious and carrying the authority of a clipboard and indeed a pen as an extension to his hand.

vii) Participant demands (Image/Viewer Relationship/Offer)

Response: The Viewer as an implied participant receives no direct demand. The modern technique of selling is to avoid direct demand but to include the prospect in what is intended to feel to him/her like an objective, almost scientific, analysis or debate about the product for sale. A similar psychological positioning has been created here by virtue of the viewer becoming an implied participant watching technical discussion between two other authoritative participants.

viii) Trace vectors and transactions (NB eye-line reactions and 'circumstances of means', i.e. tools and user becoming one)

Response: The pen is a 'circumstance of means' and in doing so

takes an additional iconic authority in that through advertising and other culture specific situations executives around a table in discussion are frequently shown with pen pointing at document or flip chart to give greater emphasis.

ix) Process of change (the 'given' and the 'new')

Response: The left side participant is established in the picture as the 'given'. He is shown here as an authority in the subject of the engine and is thus in a power relationship. He is the representative of the company who knows about this car and can transfer knowledge to what the picture suggests may be the new buyer, the human on the right side. The process passes from left to right through the car to the 'new'.

Transitory spatial arrangement/concept (yes/no) whether participant is a generalised essence of:

- Class
- Structure
- Meaning

Response: The three participants represent a generalised essence of class through the classic almost formal clothing. Both humans are in suits although one has removed his coat. They are both in ties. The third participant, the car, is shiny, white and would be

seen by the public as a symbol of wealth and up market socio-economic lifestyle. As we have established there are no other participants in the picture that would reduce this meaning.

Is the Linearity (position of one object in relation to another):

i) Spatial?

Response: The objects are spatial yet so tightly related through vectoring and composition as to establish a sense of single purpose.

ii) Locative?

left/right

Response: The linearity is left to right

top/bottom

Response: The position of ascendancy has been reduced but the positioning of the company name establishes its importance as an overarching 'given'.

centre/margin. Does centre unify the information or provide meaning from which the surrounding elements draw their own

meaning?

Response: The centre does unify the information but the surrounding elements do not draw their meaning from it although it is the reason for their existence in the picture.

Is there a 'locative circumstance' which relates other participants to a specific participant in a setting?

Response: No.

iii) Reading Paths

Response: The reading path appears to take a circular route which starts at the point of intersection between the pointing hand and the eye-line of the second participant. From there the eye runs back up the two vectors and down again but within the context of the powerful presence of the car.

iv) Motion (i.e. cat climbs tree)

Response: There is no motion in the picture although an implied assumption is that the left side human will follow this position with a further pointing to other parts on the engine.

v) Co-operative

Response: There is a co-operative element in that the powerful vectoring draws the right side human who is probably, before the 'action' suggested in this picture, a stranger to the left side human, into a close relationship based on mutual technical interest.

- vi) Social (interactive process between participants)

Response: See above.

- vii) Multimodal and materiality (in terms of typeface, quality of paper, shape/size of text).

Response: The modes in use in this brochure include the following:

High gloss paper

Full colour

Hard spine binding for the brochure itself

Paper size A4

Variable use of type size

- c) Colour (part of modality marker list):

Score on 1-5 basis.

Colour Saturation (scale full colour saturation (5) to absence of colour (0))

Response: Score Saturated Full Colour 4

Colour Differentiation (scale maximum range (5) to monochrome (0))

Response: Score Colour Range 4

Colour Modulation (scale full modulation (5) to plain unmodulated (0))

Response: Score Colour Modulation 4

Contextualisation (scale absence of background (0) to full articulation/detail (5). Note level of degrees of focus, muddy dark background. High degree (5) low (0))

Response: Score Background Context 1

Response: Score Background Focus 4

Representation (scale maximum abstraction (5) to maximum representation of pictorial detail (0))

Response: Score Representation 4

Depth in perspective (scale from absence of depth (0) to maximum deep perspective (5))

Response: Score Perspective 3

Illumination (scale full play of light/shade (5) to absence (0))

Response: Score Illumination 3

Brightness (scale maximum degrees of brightness (5) to black and white (0))

Response: Score Brightness 3

- d) Viewer Perspective (subjective/objective. including position of viewer as invisible onlooker):

Response:

No	Demand	...	...	...	gaze at the viewer
Yes	Offer	....	...	absence of gaze at the viewer	
No	Intimate/personal	...	...		close shot

Yes	Social	...	...	...	medium shot
No	Impersonal	...	...	...	long shot
No	Involvement	...	...	...	frontal angle
Yes	Detachment	...	...	...	oblique angle
No	Viewerpower	...	...	...	high angle
Yes	Equality	...	...	...	eye level
Yes	Represented participant power				low angle

e) Line, Framing and Rallentando (note that the stronger the framing the more separate the unit of representation).

Response: The viewer is drawn to the central box created by the two upright frames of the human figures and the top line of the rectangle created by the front of the bonnet and the bottom line of the picture. Within that rectangle there is the line of arm, the two eye-lines of left side to right side human figures and the right side to the point of contact with the left arm of the left side participant. That point of contact is strengthened by the V formation of the front and side of the car. This joins the pen-pointing line and continues to the rear corner of the open bonnet. The oblique angle of the car carries the eye into the foreground. A further line running parallel to the top of the picture reduces the area of investigation at the same time as the bottom frame containing the name of the company written at the top of the picture. There is a series of further framing lines both behind the left side figure plus a further set of vertical lines behind the car

which reduces the transactional area of the picture.

f) Criterial Factors:

Cultural, (signmaker in socio-economic terms)

Response: The sign-maker has contrived to ensure the only resonance for the viewer will be one of affluent, traditional middle-class lifestyle. This resonance is created by the suits and ties of the human participants which transfers to the car.

Power relationship, (signmaker to viewer)

Response: The sign-maker has created the viewer and rejected any other potential purchaser. For example, there may be wealthy purchasers drawn from the world of film, pop music, academia, or even design, who could and would be interested in the car for sale but they have, by a paradigmatic choice, been rejected.

History of the sign/tradition of use

Response: The use of the pen as an instrument that lends power to the user has been mentioned earlier. It plays an important part in this transaction.

Icon and Symbol usage, symbol attribute may have salience through placement, focus or colour, be pointed at, look out of place, or by convention. Human participants usually pose for view rather than be involved in some action.

Response: The only icon used is that of the heart placed beside the sub-brand name TECHNO which itself has no explanation. The heart with its representation of warmth may have been devised as an attempt to humanise the cold Japanese technological hegemony.

Contextual (including layout), role of carrier

Response: The car as carrier dominates the space of the picture yet the full extent of the visual meaning is created by the two human Participants who do no more than point at the engine.

Representation of:

- Detail
- Depth
- Tonal shades (scale from absence to maximum)

Response: The representation of the criterial elements are emphasised through the detail, locative positioning, depth of colour and use of neutral tonal shades. The result is that the three

participants are clearly emphasised as such with each participant separated in terms of their role through the use of colour contrast, foregrounding and involvement in a network of vectors (described above).

2. Interest

a) Identify if and how:

- People
- Places

Things, combine into meaningful whole which is/is not an extension of the meaning.

Response: The 'people' and 'the thing' (the car) combine meaningfully as we have stated, through the powerful use of vectors and foregrounding. The 'place' is less meaningful. It could easily be the outer collection point for a car whose maintenance has been completed or a stand at an exhibition where one enthusiast is discussing the technical elements of the car with another.

b) Unisemic or polysemic: (see Figure 5)

- Diacritical

- Taxonomic
- Lexical

Response: The picture is polysemic with each meaning unidirectional, one strengthening the other in terms of the taxonomic classification shown in Figure 5. The meanings are apparent within the context of the text which accompanies the picture and which refers to the sales operation. Thus the left side participant must be assumed, in the absence of a caption, to be a salesman who is identifying sales strengths within the engine. By pointing at one element and showing his own authority through the symbolic use of a clipboard and pencil, a second level of meaning is adumbrated. This part of the engine to which the participant points is well engineered, so is the rest of the engine and through that the same sense of quality is suggested for the whole car, much of which is not visible. The expression of acceptance on the face of the right side participant is one of pleasurable involvement in the discussion. Although the picture is polysemic and taxonomic the second and third layers of meaning are not easily identified and to the viewer may not be as readily accepted as they appear to be by the right side participant.

- c) Integration of different Semiotic Codes . Is there an overarching code providing a logic of integration such as:

- Code of spatial composition, i.e. texts where all elements

are spatially co-present such as painting, magazine pages, etc.

- Code of temporal composition in which texts unfold over time such as in speech, drama, opera. Although there can be an integrative principle through an overall rhythm.

Response: All elements are co-present but the over-arching code which is social and cultural because the viewer is expected to identify with the right side participant and, like him, become satisfied with the explanation being given. Alternatively, to be party to what would then be a three-way discussion in which one person, the left side participant, leads while the other equal partner, the right side participant accepts the point of view of the left side participant and the viewer should therefore do so also.

d) Locative Circumstances and Relationships:

- Foregrounding
- Backgrounding,
- Is there foregrounding to create stress/contrast?
- Is locative function realised by overlap, gradient of focus, colour saturation?
- Angles, curves and other geometrics.

Response: As discussed earlier, the locative circumstance have been created through fore grounding, reinforced by colour contrast and vectoring, with geometrics playing a significant role in reinforcing the importance of the central transaction. Overlap is used to place the right side participant in front of the car as participant in order to make it clear that although the car is the point of the discussion it is the right side participant who is the goal and participant of decision.

e) Social Meaning through Coding Interaction by discrete Social Groups and Orientation regarding Modality:

- Technological coding where concern is visual representation as a blueprint.
- Sensory coding is where the pleasure principle is dominant as in art, fashion, cooking. The coding is the source of pleasure and therefore conveys high modality.
- Abstract coding is used by elite talking to other elites
- Naturalistic norm is where coding is the generally accepted norm.

Response: Text selects a model reader through its choice of code, style and assumption of a specific competence. What

is the social meaning of the picture and are there exclusions of other viewers because of its choice? A number of concurrent social codings are working within the picture. There is an implied technological coding as one participant appears to be emphasising what is possibly a technological sales plus, although this can only be assumed because technological diagrams have not been used. There is a minimum of sensory coding to the extent that many business executives actually gain their pleasure from the interactive process and the codes. These codes include body position, use of pen/pencil as extensions of the hand, the carrying of clipboards, and the cars, they use. To that extent some codes reinforce sensory allusions. For the fourth implied participant there is the sense of being a member of an elite group of the two represented participants. This is an implied abstract coding. The overall modality is created, however, through the accoutrements of the left side salesperson and the way the usual low modality which would be associated with a salesman is changed through the executive, efficient, hands-on stance of that participant.

f) Note the different meanings created compositionally by multi-modality through interrelated systems:

- Informative Value. Placement of elements (participants and

syntagms that relate them to each other and viewer) endows them with informational value attached to the 'zones' of the image: left and right, top and bottom, centre and margin.

- **Saliency.** Elements (participants and representational/interactive syntagms) that attract viewers to different degrees, as realised by placement in the foreground or background, relative size, contrasts in tonal value (or colour), differences in sharpness, etc.
- **Framing.** Presence or absence of framing (elements which create dividing lines, or actual frame lines) disconnects or connects elements of the image, signifying they belong or do not belong together.

Response: The subject of the syntagm is placed centrally. The surrounding elements lend information and purpose to that subject who is both actor and goal, creating a relay effect by passing additional information to the third participant on the right side, who becomes the goal. Saliency is generated through the placement of the three participants in such a way that they create their own framing. This is a rectangle that holds the viewer's attention centrally within the picture.

3. Desire/Action

- a) Social Deixis. (Note any references as result of the context of the socially identified visual articulations that identifies what is the tradeoff between a discrete social cultural group and by so doing refers back to the addresser.)

Response: The context and socially identifiable articulations of the two human participants in upper socio-economic groups make a reference contextually to comfortable lifestyles which in themselves can be enhanced through the purchase of what the sign-maker sees as a metonymic symbol of 'good living'.

- b) Salience of Participants, by:

- Size
- Focus

Tonal Contrast (i.e. borders between black and white, for example)

Placement and Visual Weights

Colour Contents (saturated versus soft colours)

Human Faces or Cultural Symbols

List what left in, what left out.

Response: The salience of the participants has already been referred to through the positioning, focus, tonal contrast,

placement and facial expressions. The colour content is above the naturalistic in terms of saturation but normal if compared to the saturation levels of television and some advertising.

- c) Relationship between text and visual (Their interaction? Which comes first?)

Response: The text of the page under consideration and its preceding page are concerned with the sales operation and dealerships. The picture has no direct caption although an emphasised sentence concerning the squeezing out of waste does take on the quasi function of being a caption. The fact remains that the meaning is reliant on the text which surrounds it on the page even though there is no reference to the picture to explain the meaning of the actions or dialogue within it. To that extend the text must come first.

- d) Visual Ellipsis (what is left out but assumed)

Response: What has been left out is any reference to why one part of the engine is being identified without any statement of what it is nor why it has been selected. There is too great a visual ellipsis as a result but without the assumption of a meaning.

- e) Deviance, whereby as a result of the cultural classification system there is deviance on the part of the reader who may refuse to be

part of the community defined by the sign-producing paradigm.

Response: There is deviance as a result of the clothes and classical style of the human participants who form an established sense of who the target should be. In doing this they are excluding a wide range of potential customers who have high disposable incomes yet do not subscribe to the classical form of dress and posture. Indeed many in the world of the media, the arts and that of the entrepreneur frequently reject such visible icons while still buying market 'high-end objects' such as the car in the picture.

- f) Dimensions of Visual Space (i.e. proportions of mass and space)

Response: The foregrounding of the three participants and their size ensures there are few contrast in terms of space. In fact part of the ambiguity of the picture is created by the lack of a positioning context.

- g) Non-linear compositional factors, i.e. readers may read magazine from back to front or fall into their own reading pattern. Is the non-linear composition created by the producers for their own agendas?

Response: There is no real opportunity for non-linear compositional factors with the exception of what appears to be a reflection of the car in a mirror, plus marks on the background

display panels which engage the eye and create an unknown factor due to their lack of cohesion with other items in the picture.

Commentary on Pilot Application and Summary of Data

The tables on the next page constitute a summary of the above data, with an assessment of first and second orders of meaning derived from the responses. The objective is to draw together the responses in order to identify significant first and second orders of meaning. It is followed by two charts headed Corporate Ethnography (Figures 7 and 8). The Corporate Ethnography table is to list the paradigmatic choices apparently available for encoding by the sign-maker(s). The table lists the forms and formats which could have been used to transfer the positioning messages in terms of text/visual relationships and materiality of genres. Effective communication requires that participants make their messages maximally understandable in a particular context. However, this takes place in a social structure marked by power differences which affect the maximal understanding.

As Kress and van Leeuwen maintain in their definition of social semiotics (1996, p.11), it should be noted from where socio-culturally the sign-maker(s) choose forms for the expression of what they have in mind, i.e. forms they see as most apt and plausible in the given context. The interests of the sign-makers at the moment of making the sign lead them to choose as criterial an aspect or cluster of aspects of the object to be represented at that moment and then to choose which is the most

CORPORATE ETHNOGRAPHY
(SYNTAGM LEXICON)

MESSAGE FORMS AVAILABLE	*SUPRA-SENTENTIAL STRUCTURE (How many genre <u>could</u> have been used – conceptual and physical) to carry message	WHAT ARE THE RULES OF INTERPRETATION (which given items have a given integration/comms value)	GOVERNING NORMS (For this type of interaction)

CORPORATE ETHNOGRAPHY (TOYOTA)
(Paradigm Choices)

MESSAGE FORMS AVAILABLE	*SUPRA-SENTENTIAL STRUCTURE (How many genre <u>could</u> have been used – conceptual and physical) to carry message	WHAT ARE THE RULES OF INTERPRETATION (Which Given items have a given integration/commns value	GOVERNING NORMS (For this type of interaction)
<div>1. Relate text to visual</div> <div>2. Explain by text of visual the precise subject and meaning of the transaction.</div> <div>3. For technical resonance show engine in diagram format or enlarge item identified by participant (actor) with his pen.</div> <div>4. Participant could be in white coat to denote scientific authority.</div>	<div>1. Uncoated paper for whole brochure to thus widen target viewer net</div> <div>2. Use of video for whole annual report or as support material.</div> <div>3. Show whole car or foreground it to strengthen the ellipsis created by part of engine which sign-maker assumes will be metonymically associated with whole car</div> <div>4. Varied/widened socio-cultural codes regarding participant B (goal) of transaction, to widen target appeal.</div>	<div>1. Readership of annual report includes all those already listed as company stakeholders, therefore viewers not only financial analysts.</div> <div>2. A viewer acceptance of colour markers that are “larger than life” even although this is a corporate and not a sales text.</div>	<div>1. Financial reports must legally carry certain data. Additional support material and visuals can be varied.</div> <div>2. The governing norms vary according to the industry/commercial sector within which the selected company operates.</div> <div>3. Motor industry expects a seriousness of message form and materiality at corporate level but does accept a fantasy/dream equation with reality.</div>

plausible, the most apt. For the purpose of this research, however, I have only identified *possible* pressures that become apparent during the visual examination of the work. The lacuna which exists between analytical criteria developed from social semiotic theory and the criteria currently used by public affairs practitioners to make judgements is difficult to quantify meaningfully or indeed to identify. The varying degrees or levels of training in visual comprehension differ markedly between executives who might use this methodology. Unlike the professions of accountancy and the law, there are no core skills laid down as the basic requirement for the practice of corporate or marketing communications (Cutlip, Centre and Broom 1985. p.61). I interviewed Colin Farrington, the Director-General of the Institute of Public Relations (13 June 2001), which is the professional institution with responsibility for the function within which directors of corporate communications are likely to be working. He confirmed that:

although there are many degrees at first and master's level in public relations, not to mention diplomas in public relations, which allow entry to the Institute, there is no legal or other requirement that prevents a practitioner from working in the field without previous qualification. For this reason it can be difficult to ensure a consistent level of knowledge among practitioners.

(unpublished interview by RW on 13 June 2001 with Farrington)

I suggest, however, there are few practitioners who would apply the density of visual questioning applied in this research because the

emphasis in training and background experience for communications practitioners has historically been laid upon the written word.

To continue the development of the methodology I have included a cross-checking function that would be available to the practitioner if further data is required. The significance of such a 'second opinion' is that the CDA approach examines the discourse from a different perspective. I have not applied a CDA template to the Toyota picture as the pilot analysis was primarily to test the core questions. It is helpful, however, before moving onto the development of a separate CDA template to restate the earlier CDA elements informing them from comments based on the Toyota example:

Define the Visual Discourse: The discourse in the case of the Toyota photograph is positioned within the context of a retail/distributor/customer relationship. The power/subordinate interaction has already been noted but there is also a subtle placing of the salesman so that technical credibility is created (see attention-gaining factors listed by Tack 1993) as a means of holding the early attention of the viewer through an identification with the customer in the picture.

The Influence of Signmaker Discourse: In the Toyota case the signmaker may be Japanese, hence the somewhat formal attire of the two participants chosen to symbolise the young 'expert'. Through the combination of attire and choice of models the Japanese parentage of the product is also reinforced. Even if the faces of the human participants

were masked an objective viewer may have identified the nationality of the human participants who play a role in the wider discourse within which the corporate positioning of Toyota operates.

The First and Second Orders of Meaning: This element has been discussed under the core template regarding the first order of meaning created by the attire and the second order, which refers to lifestyle, success, socio-economic groupings, etc.

Interactive Power Play: This too has been discussed as it relates to the different interactive processes which take place in corporate target audience/company representative relationships, in addition to those which take place in a product sales relationship.

Historicity and Critical Discourse Analysis: The application of factors of historicity are important. In my experience there is a tendency among marketing practitioners to take a 'snapshot' attitude to their work preferring to forget what has gone before if it is outside their own terms of experience. The concept of working in the here and now and a feeling of "I am in control" is a driving stimulus of modern Western management. "Business is in the driving seat" as Hertz (2001, p.7) says, and "corporations determine the rules of the game". This attitude tends to percolate management structures. As commented earlier it is not possible to avoid the Derridean view that "we all lie down on the ashes of our ancestors as we read" (Collins and Mayblin 1996). There is a commonly accepted discourse in the automotive industry which accepts

past glories of marques and brands even if the company concerned is under new ownership, vide the history-based publicity surrounding the Bentley participation at Le Mans (2001) despite the marque being owned now by the German manufacturer Volkswagen/Audi.

The Visual Lexis: Some of the paradigmatic choices for the sign-maker which generate their own meaning because of what was rejected, are considered as an ethnographic table (Figure 7), first in a blank form and then completed from data informed by Toyota analysis (Figure 8). The purpose of the form is to demand through questions a wider consideration than “what were the available alternatives”. Through this form the discussion is widened to include rules of interpretation and governing norms. In the Toyota case the question can be asked as to why the photograph maintains a powerful foregrounding of a polished car and includes participants with high-level socio-economic clothes yet the sign-maker locates the participants against a badly marked background wall with poorly maintained decoration. The effect of such a choice creates unnecessary ambiguity in the mind of the viewer.

The Role of Metalanguage: The significance of metalanguage in its linguistic sense cannot strictly be used in relation to visual ingredients. There is, however, a similar effect when a visual participant (usually non-human) comments by its presence upon the visual language used within the brochure. For example, signs used in one photograph may be continued into another within the same brochure to reinforce codes recognised by the viewer. In the case of the photograph analysed, the

designers images concentrated upon the four active participants, the car, the two humans and the viewer. It is saying "this is corporate brochure-speak". Unlike the earlier case quoted regarding 'Beanz Meanz Heinz' (O'Sullivan 1994) where the suggestion was that the reader already accepted the advertising code of that metalanguage. It is less certain that such acceptance exists in the case of corporate literature. In cases such as the Toyota photograph, for example, the objectives of the sign-maker vary according to the target viewer who may have many different reason for assessing the company, reasons which only become apparent after discrete market research.

The danger is that the sign-maker may decide without full knowledge, on the basis that certain objects in the picture will act in the same manner as when a film-maker uses a positioning shot to establish the visual language that will be used within the next set of frames. It is less apparent whether such visual codes are acceptable to the ultimate recipients as the linguistic example quoted above regarding 'Heinz'.

Visual Cohesion and Linkage: The use of linkage and visual cohesion has been mentioned but the difference is the difference between the use of icons or other signs to maintain a continuity or narrative between pictures and the use of signs which reflect subjective comment by the signmaker on the visual imagery.

This chapter (VII), has been concerned with the first stage in the development of a model whose application will be by means of a core

template. I have discussed selected techniques used within critical discourse. These techniques were informed by results obtained from the pilot test on a photograph from a Toyota Annual Report. By concentrating on one photograph and applying it to a corporate text about which I knew little in terms of the meanings the sign-writer(s) wished to transfer, I was able to gain a more objective insight into the effectiveness of my process. The next chapter (VIII) is concerned with the application and development of the templates to examples taken from Rover's corporate texts.

CHAPTER VIII

APPLICATION OF METHODOLOGY TO ROVER BROCHURES

The template applied to the Toyota photograph contained questions based upon concepts selected from the field of social semiotics. In this chapter I develop variations that will meet the needs of practising corporate communications executives. To do this I have designed a 'short' and a 'long' form questionnaire. Later I develop an even shorter process from these so that an analyst can quickly compare different versions of brochures. Noting the earlier comments (Tack 1993, Edwards 1999, Hoare 2000) concerning the constraints on an executive's time, it is unlikely that a senior manager signing-off a draft brochure will wish to apply to every visual element such detailed level of analysis as that used for Toyota. In the Rover artefacts, for example, there are sixteen pages for analysis plus the internal and external covers which are themselves important signifiers of meaning within the context of the AIDA model.

Using the template applied to the Toyota photograph as a foundation I have developed a version which combines some questions and reduces the complexity of others. My objective is not to examine each page of the Rover material in the same detail as in the single photograph, but to consider the thematic meaning contained within the total brochures and to view pages as single syntagms in themselves. Where there is a specific need, as for the cover of a brochure, or a deviance from the primary theme, or where specific pages or visual items require more detailed analysis, the full-length template used on the

Toyota photograph can be applied. If necessary, answers can be cross-checked through the application of the CDA questionnaire. I have termed this core template the 'long form' questionnaire. Because the front and back covers of a brochure play an important role in attention-gaining the format of the templates should be in the long form. A shorter version, where the aim is to monitor the thematic sequence and content of each page, has been named the 'short form questionnaire'. At the completion of the analysis, however, a practitioner may wish to compare the data with earlier editions or other artefacts produced within their total communications programme. Such a comparison needs to be simple, easy to apply yet capable of identifying variations where the long form template may be needed. I have termed this specialised template the 'comparative form' questionnaire. The comparison is with trends over a period. This ensures that meanings previously released into the automotive discourse are compared with those about to be offered externally to the same target audiences.

In the application that follows, the comparison will be between a series of Rover Group brochures entitled *Facts and Figures* produced in the years 1995, 1996 and 1997. My executive interviews commenced in 1995 so it could be fairly assumed the brochures would reflect the views expressed by those respondents who were members of the board at that time. Experience applying the Toyota pilot test informed the development of the short, long and comparative form templates and as a result the following factors were taken into consideration. The need to:

- Adjust the order of selected questions to create a logical narrative.
- Alter the wording where it was not immediately clear to a non-specialist.

- Merge questions where the theme or basic analytical subject was similar
For example, questions relating to vectoring and linearity are brought together, as are questions concerning criterial factors or the analysis of codes and their implication.
- Delete questions that were less relevant to a commercial text or demanded too detailed a level of understanding from the end user of social semiotic/CDA theory. The question concerning social deixis for example, is answered within the context of a number of other questions.

Questions within one module of the AIDA chain that continue questions from an earlier section but are unlikely to be decoded by the viewer until later reading, such as those concerned with social codes, are merged into a single question. The analysis of semiotic codes, for example, has been followed by a question assessing social meaning through coding interaction which is followed by a further question on the emphasis of criterial factors, under the Interest module. However, where the section headings within the AIDA formula are important chronologically to the signmaker working within the same sequence as the target group, the questions have not been merged but refer back to earlier questions. The analysts are thus reminded to keep a sense of diachronicity or narrative in mind as they carry out the analysis.

Kress and van Leeuwen make the point (p.218) that “readers of magazines ... may flick through the magazine, stopping every now and again to look at a picture or read a headline, and perhaps later returning to some of the articles which drew their attention ... Newspapers, similarly are not read in linear order,

but selectively and partially.” This view is described by Willis (1990) when he refers to the:

Introduction of design styles which acknowledge readers ... as ‘wandering’, ‘cruising’ or ‘drifting’ across a magazine rather than reading it, word by word, image by image, so that parts of magazines link up with a variety of other media,

(Willis 1990, p.55)

A similar reading path can take place in the case of commercial brochures with reference to other commercial situations that have become attached to that particular signifier such as a motor vehicle marque. For this reason it is my intention to analyse, with the exception of the cover and back cover, each page as a single semiotic signifier. When, or if, the analyst wishes to assess one picture on a page in more detail the long form template is available. Any two pages which face each other are likely to be read as a single page by viewers (see earlier comments by Kress and van Leeuwen and also by Willis (1990).

Because meaning transfer is a continuous process it contributes to the specialist industrial discourse which includes new and old participants drawn from corporate target audiences such as industry managers, financial analysts, specialist journalists, academics, trade and distributor intermediaries plus the ultimate target audience, the prospective customers. Many participants in this discourse may be constant over years. They may read and compare consciously or unconsciously the visual meanings transferred by the texts. For this reason I have made comparisons with other editions of the same brochure published

during the period. My methodology was to summarise the first and second orders of meaning drawing them together for easy comparison on a single sheet matrix (see Figure 9 as blank form). It has a space for the headings of the corporate image dimensions for correlation and a space for the results of an application of the critical discourse analysis within that context. This approach cannot remove all traces of subjectivity but it can help reduce it by allowing the analyst to identify elements within the process with greater precision. This enables other peer group managers to concentrate on that factor and their own interpretation.

For the cover analysis (including back cover and inside of each) the long form template was used. The front and back covers are the first visuals to be seen by the viewer. Unless the covers hold attention it is unlikely the viewer will continue to read. For this reason some changes have been made in the sequence of questions. Colour classification plays an immediate role in catching attention (see earlier comment by van Walsum concerning "lasting impression made within ninety seconds"). For similar reasons, questions concerning viewing perspective leading to criterial factors and polysemic design are now included along with colour in the first Attention module. Questions regarding the second orders of meaning, semiotic codes, social and compositional meaning are included within module two, Interest.

Caption/text relationships, visual ellipsis, dimensional use of space, deviance and non-compositional factors, all of which, together with salience factors regarding participants which may encourage action, are more likely to transfer meaning on considered viewing and for the purposes of this template have been included

within the third Desire/Action module.

For the application to the Rover Group corporate brochure published in 1995, each question is followed by a response (see Exhibits at the end of the thesis for copies of the pages of the brochures).

ADAPTED LONG FORM CLASSIFICATION

1. Attention

- a) Identify Signifiers, their causal relationships (if appropriate) and whether there are stages in the use of metaphor.

Response:

Cover Page:

The following signifiers are apparent on first view of the full colour cover:

- Of the 8¼ inch cover, approximately 5¼ inches is occupied by a photograph (for description see later) bled into three further signifiers in the form of the company name and two logos.
- The first signifier names the company as 'Rover Group' in a

san serif typeface.

Below the company name are two logos, one of the 'Land-Rover', the other 'Rover'. The latter being the logo for the saloon car marque.

- The bottom section of the cover on the right side carries the title of the brochure 'Facts and Figures' also in a san serif typeface but a different type from that used for the words Rover Group. The year '1995' is in another typeface and set below the title.

b) The Linear Structure of Representation.

- Linearity and Narrative Sequence and Action
 - i) Identify Interactive Participants and their Vectoring (actor, goal, and transaction. Is there a 'relay' whereby there is an extension of the meaning?

Response: The photograph is an MGF Sports car (note that the MG marque logo is not included in the set of logos at the top of the page). The car is red with hood (or hard top) erected and driving from right to left obliquely across picture towards the viewer. No driver is visible through the windscreen and the car is in the middle of the road (thus on

both counts there is no national identification through left/right hand steering and side of road). The background to the picture is a moderately hilly landscape with no distant focus. The relay effect, i.e. extension of the meaning, is created by the 'surging' position of the car from the right towards the viewer who thus becomes the recipient or goal of the car, the actor. The 'surge' effect is enhanced by the slight uphill gradient of the road. There are a number of vectors which by extension cross 2 inches and 4.5 inches outside the right edge of the page. These vectors include the line of the background hill top reinforced by the top of the car windscreen, the upper edge of the road creates a line which is met just within the frame of the picture by the line of the lower edge of the car. The vectors act less as a framing device than to create an expansion or 'star burst' effect which starts off-frame at the two points 2 inches and 4.5 inches to the right of the picture. The effect is to reinforce what I have termed the 'surge' of the sports car.

- (ii) What are *Represented* Participants (people, places and things in picture? Note abstract concepts which could be subject about which the images are being produced).

Response: There are three represented participant groups:

- The top page bold lettering 'The Rover Group' with the two marque logos Land Rover and Rover, in their brand marque colours, below.
 - The large centre page photograph of the MG car.
 - The title of brochure 'Facts and Figures' and '1995' in bottom right corner.
- iii) The Implied Interactive Participants who silently instruct the Viewer through design of picture.

Response: There are two implied interactive participants, the first being the viewer towards whom the car is 'surging' like a pet dog bounding to its master. The second is the designer of the photograph who sees the car carrying the group name, and its two additional marque names, towards the viewer, creating a demand for acceptance.

- iv) The Carrier and Possessive Attributes (i.e. how do the participants fit together to make a larger statement?)

Response: There is a high degree of modality because the background, although a setting of rugged country scenery with an upward gradient, is in a low level of focus and detail thus increasing the power of the main actor which appears in a natural setting.

- v) Trace Vectors and Transactions (are there any 'circumstances of means' as there were in the Toyota picture?)

Response: There are no strong eye-line reactions although the assumed context of the driver (who is invisible due to the opaque windscreen) is positioned in the middle of the picture regardless of whether the car is left or right hand drive thus avoiding national associations.

- vi) Does Vectoring lead the eye through tilting, repetition of colour, framing by differing styles of photography. How is the eye led?

Response: Linearity and vectoring dealt with in first question. Tilting has been used to create a sense of engine power.

vii) Is the linearity (position of one object in relation to another):

- Spatial?

Response: The object (the MG) in the main picture uses the space and its role as primary object/actor to reinforce its own superordinate position and dominance. The landscape is only included to set a mood of rugged wildness. There is clear white (colour of paper) space between the three signifier groupings to establish the independence of meaning of each group.

- Locative with Process of Change (the given and the new, etc.)?

a) Left/Right

Response: The linearity is right to left.

b) Top/Bottom

Response: The position of ascendancy is taken by the name of the Group and its marques.

c) Centre/Margin

Response: The centre is taken by the invisible driver with whom the viewer identifies.

d) Is there a locative circumstance which relates other participants to a specific participant in a setting?

Response: No. There is a failure to relate the locative power of an MG logo, which could have been included (as it is in the edition published in the following year) within the Rover Group logo cluster at the top of the page with the logo on the radiator/front of the car.

viii) Note Subordinate and Superordinate Participants. Is there a 'covert' taxonomy present where superordinate effect is only indicated in accompanying text?

Response: Although the viewer's eye is first 'caught' by the overwhelming size of the picture in relation to the size of the page the superordinate participant is the heading at the top of the page 'The Rover Group' and its accompanying logos. The use of a

bold, typeface, sanserif across half the width of the page establishes the subject of the brochure, and reinforces it as a Group publication, i.e. not marketing or product literature. The title, dropped to the subservient position not only at the bottom of the page but to the right (as something new and not established as a given, makes clear the brochure may be ostensibly about 'Facts and Figures' but the hidden agenda is to tell the viewer about the company.

- ix) Participant Demands (Image/Viewer Relationship/Offer).

Response: A powerful demand is made upon the implied participant, the viewer. The car, whose marque strangely is not listed in terms of its logo being part of the Rover Group set of logos at top of page, is making the assumption that the viewer is of the age, socio-economic class and lifestyle to respond to this macho surge of power. The demand could include female viewers who, if a part of the same socio-economic executive discourse, would also respond to the implied power of the car's demand.

- x) Transitory Spatial Concept and Arrangements (yes/no). Is participant a generalised essence of Class, Structure and Meaning?

Response: There is an essence of class through the symbolic association of the sports car with middle-class youth and an upmarket lifestyle. This positioning is reinforced by the associations with the Land Rover logo, a vehicle strongly associated in its marketing with country life, and the Rover car marque with its traditional class associations. It was once known as the “Doctor’s Car” (see appendix for history of the Rover group and its marques).

There are no other participants in the main picture, nor in any of the three signifier groupings that would reduce the meaning.

- xi) Reading Paths

Response: Viewers attention immediately drawn to centre of page and surrounding image of MG but carried to top through bold use of lettering, then down to bottom right corner.

xii) Motion

Response: Yes, through positioning of car and implied movement (see earlier comment)

xiii) Co-operative

Response: No.

xiv) Social (Interactive Process between Participants)

Response: Socio-economic, as above.

xv) Multimodal and Materiality (typeface, quality of paper, shape and size)

Response: The modal selection is thin card for cover. Title and company headings use two different typefaces in bold.

c) Use of Colour. (Score on 1-5 basis)

- Colour Saturation (scale full colour saturation (5) to absence of colour (0))

Response: Score Saturated Full Colour 4

- Colour Differentiation (scale maximum range (5) to monochrome (0))

Response: Score Colour Range 4

- Colour Variation (scale full modulation (5) to plain unmodulated (0))

Response: Score Colour Modulation 4

- Contextualisation (scale absence of background (0) to full articulation/detail (5). Note level of degrees of focus, muddy dark background. High Degree (5) low (0))

Response: Score Background Context 2

Representation (scale max. abstraction (5) to maximum representation of pictorial detail (0))

Response: Score Representation 4

- Depth in perspective (scale from absence of depth (0) to maximum deep perspective (5))

Response: Score Perspective 4

- Illumination (scale full play of light/shade (5) to absence (0))

Response: Score Illumination 3

- Brightness (scale maximum degrees of brightness (5) to black and white (0))

Response: Score Brightness 3

d) Criterial Factors:

- Cultural (sign-maker in socio-economic terms)

Response: The sign-maker has ensured that the resonance with the viewer will only be achieved with an ABC1 audience, probably young, with a lifestyle that includes a sports car. There is a second order of meaning, however, which is using the power and dominance to project a sense of youth and power to the other marques within the Group, i.e. Land Rover and Rover, two brands which at that time were showing “signs of tiredness” according to an of-the-record comment made to me by a senior executive at the Rover Group. Brand crossover is frequently

used as an image creating technique in multi-brand companies.

- Power relationship (sign-maker top viewer)

Response: See above.

- History of sign/tradition of use

Response: The MG has a long history of racing and rally successes dating from 1923. During the pre-war period it won countless races and set speed records for its size and class. It became the embodiment of the middle-class sportsman, a tradition which continued after World War II. It embodies the concept of the traditional British sports car and associated lifestyle. The new model shown on the cover has thus an iconic value which connotes an altered meaning associated with the corporation, the Rover Group, which produces it.

- Icon and Symbol usage, symbol attributes which may have salience through placement, focus or colour.

Response: See above for description of MG as a symbol of an ABC1 socio-economic lifestyle. The two logos at top of page create their own dyadic relationship each transferring

meaning to the other and back again.

- Contextual (including layout), role of carrier, etc.

Response: The demand/gaze of the photograph with its implied “come and take me” positioning carries a range of second order of meanings which imply “break out of your bland life style and buy some excitement”.

- Representation of detail, depth and tonal shades.

Response: The criterial element is represented by the positioning rather than the detail. The car could have achieved the same level of meaning transfer with a higher or lesser degree of detail. Depth and increased use of tonal contrast, however, would have detracted from the dominant impact of the primary participant (the car) in the picture.

- e) Viewer Perspective (subjective/objective including position of viewer as invisible onlooker):

Response:

Yes	Demand	...	...	...	gaze at the viewer
No	Offer	...	...	...absence of gaze at the viewer	

No	Intimate/personal	...	...	close shot
No	Social	...	...	medium shot
Yes	Impersonal	...	...	long shot
No	Involvement	...	...	frontal angle
Yes	Detachment	...	...	oblique angle
Yes	Viewerpower	...	...	high angle
Yes	Equality	...	...	eye level
Yes	Represented participant power...			low angle

f) Unisemic or polysemic (see Figure 5): i.e. diacritical, taxonomic or lexical.

Response: The page is polysemic as a result of the three units of meaning, the picture, the company names/logos and the title. The core meaning of the picture could be either unisemic, in that it draws the meanings discussed above into a single whole, or taxonomic in that all the elements are pointing towards one positioning goal.

2. Interest

a) Identify if and how people, places, things, combine into a meaningful whole which is/is not an extension of the meaning and thus a creator of the second order of meaning.

Response: As stated under **Attention** the use of a single signifier.

to enhance the Rover Group and its other marques provides a second order of meaning which sets the theme for the whole brochure.

b) Integration of different Semiotic Codes. Is there an overarching code providing a logic of integration such as:

- Code of spatial composition, i.e. texts where all elements are spatially co-present such as paintings, magazine pages, etc?

Code of temporal composition in which texts unfold over time such as in speech, drama, opera or in serial texts such as commercial brochures where each subsequent page can relate back to previous pages without making a statement as such, i.e. there is a single thematic purpose to the whole brochure. There may also be the same integrative principle through an overall rhythm.

Response: The second order of meaning, that of youth and power, is carried over to page two (inside cover) where there is a picture of a new saloon (the Rover 400 model). Thus the slightly older reader with a family, for whom a sports car would be less suitable, can by implication own the Rover 400 Series saloon. The integrative principle created by this rhythm is generated in the opening bars of the longer syntagm which continue through the

brochure.

- c) Social Meaning through Coding Interaction by discrete Social Groups and Orientation and Modality effect.

Response: Social meaning and modality discussed under **Attention**

- d) Text may select a model reader through its choice of code, style and assumption of a specific competence. What is the social meaning of the picture and are there exclusions of other viewers because of its choice?

Response: Earlier we noted that the younger female executive may identify with the sports car. The slightly older female buyer is likely to be excluded, as the desire for a more 'sensible' car for the whole family makes her reject the brochure before becoming fully engaged.

- e) Locative Circumstances and Relationships:

- Foregrounding
- Backgrounding
- Is there foregrounding to create stress/contrast?
- Is Locative Function realised by overlap, gradient of focus, colour saturation?
- Angles, curves and other geometrics

Response: There is a powerful use of foregrounding with an implied demand on the viewer. The geometric lines, already discussed as an added extension of the meaning, create a visual sense of action.

f) Note different meanings created compositionally by multi-modality and by interrelated systems:

- Informative Value. Placement of elements and syntagms that relate them to each other and viewer) endows them with informational value attached to the 'zones' of the image: left and right, top and bottom, centre and margin. Note use of framing.
- Salience. Elements (participants and representational/ interactive syntagms) that attract viewers to different degrees, as realised by placement in the foreground or background, relative size, contrasts in tonal value (or colour), differences in sharpness, etc.

Response: The powerful use of framing to accentuate the star burst effect of the rush towards the viewer is created by locative positioning, diminution of background and a clear indication of salience, as described above. The

unaccounted absence of the MG logo from the family of the Rover Group in the cluster in a dominant section of the page could imply the car in the illustration is not part of the Group. In linguistic terms it is the equivalent of a failure to mention the defining subject in a paragraph at the beginning of a book. It is clear however, that the title of the brochure is of secondary importance, something which detracts from the possible objectivity or modality of the brochure as a whole.

3. Desire/Action

a) Salience of Participants that encourage action by viewer due to:

- Size
- Focus
- Tonal Contrast (i.e. borders between black and white, for example)
- Placement and Visual Weights
- Colour Contents (saturated versus soft colours)
- Human Faces or Cultural Symbols

Response: The salience factors of the front cover discussed above.

b) Relationship between textual captions and visual (their interaction? Which comes first?)

Response: The visual, as opposed to the linguistic meaning sets the tone for the whole brochure and in particular defines the underlying positioning of the Group. There is an exception in that the MG logo is missing and a significant interaction is lost.

c) Visual Ellipsis (what is left out but assumed)

Response: As stated, absence of MG logo at the 'attention-grabbing' moment. The position is retrieved at the **Interest** or **Desire** stage where the caption for the front cover is found on the inside of the cover.

d) Dimensions of Visual Space (i.e. proportions of mass and space)

Response: The active participant dominates visual space and thus holds first instance total attention.

e) Non-linear Compositional Factors i.e. the viewer may read a magazine from back to front, or fall into their own reading pattern (Willis 1990, p.55). Is the non-linear composition created by the producers for their own agenda?

Response: The card cover makes it difficult to read the brochure as if it were a magazine, although many corporate brochures do have the pages turned quickly (usually in sequence). The totality

of the page is thus noted before reading individual texts. Each page should therefore be designed as a single semiotic entity with the **Attention** mode in mind.

- f) **Deviance.** As a result of the cultural classification systems is there deviance which may create in the reader a refusal to be part of the community defined by the sign producing paradigm.

Response: The front cover certainly creates deviance in that there is a significant desire to attract the attention of the young male and perhaps the 'thirty-something' male with a rejection of other (older for example) members of the target viewer who may have been drawn into the rest of the brochure. The trade distributor is likely to respond in similar fashion to the customer. There is thus a pronounced deviance from the core positioning requirement of the brochure. The C2, D and E socio-economic groups have been excluded by virtue of their buying power and likely rejection of the lifestyle represented by the cover photograph. To avoid repetition, the back cover of the brochure, which may be seen by the viewer before the front cover, is analysed here within the context of the front cover, i.e. although the same chronology is maintained, only those elements which differ, add or subtract from the front cover are considered in any detail. The questions are not repeated for this page but take a similar chronology.

Back Cover:

Response: The back cover consists of one photograph and no wording except for the name Rover in place of the number on the registration plate. This device, as in the use of the letters MG on the front cover ensures there is no national identification of the setting. The photograph shows a white Rover 600 model, saloon, positioned on a coastal hill with a soft focus landscape as background. The car is stationary with the rear end facing the viewer and no signifiers to identify or describe the driver. The car is the only active participant in the picture although an implied relationship exists between the sea, hills, red sky and the car.

The front cover and back cover use two signifiers, a sports car and a white saloon suggesting, like the Toyota photograph, an affluent lifestyle that relates to two different types of implied participant. In the case of the MGF the car is 'bounding' towards the viewer asking to be 'taken' in its arms. Whereas the white saloon on the back cover, reads from left to right in such a way as to suggest the third participant, the viewer, is in the driving seat and driving in a relaxed enjoyable setting. The appeal is to an older reader, in contrast to the front cover's focus on the younger viewer. It is no coincidence that a series of Rover marketing advertisements at the time of the brochure's production used the slogan "Relax it's a Rover". The cover visuals communicate thus with two types of viewer. Avoiding national associations both covers gaze towards a

viewer as participant either as friend (the MG) waiting to be welcomed or as an owner (saloon) already in the driving seat. In social semiotic terms there is a question mark over whether it is possible to transfer a coherent meaning through the combined front and back covers to viewers with such different ages, attitudes and social positioning, even if both types of viewer form a similar social class. There may be a similarity of class discourse but if it is argued that the young and the middle-aged form their own cohorts in terms of cultural discourse then the aggressive meaning of the front cover is likely to reject the 'relaxed' (as in the Rover advertisement), meaning of the back cover and vice versa. We must never forget "how the prevailing meanings are the outcome of encounters between individuals, groups and classes and their respective cosmologies and conditions of existence" (Tomaselli 1948, p.29).

To highlight certain elements in this first stage of the Rover analysis it is apparent, even on the covers (back and front), that a disjuncture occurs between the corporate needs of senior management and their implementation. The front cover fails to include the full range of product logos even though a diversified product range was one of the core ingredients of the Group' positioning requirement. The objectivity or modality expected in a corporate artefact to be used for the transfer of information has been lost as a result of the subordinate position on the page for the title. These are the first signs, later to be repeated, of a failure

by the sign-writer to understand the complexities of socio-cultural discourse and the correlation that should exist with the designated viewers of the visual meaning. Turning to the inside cover and the pages within the brochure, I have developed a shorter form template which is discussed below.

Application of Short Form Template to 1995 Edition of Rover Corporate Brochure

For the 'body' pages of a brochure it is necessary to reduce the number of criteria applied. The full taxonomy or long form template used for a single picture (i.e. the Toyota example) would if applied to every visual within a brochure require a level of time investment unacceptable to a working executive. In the 1995 Rover brochure for example, there are eighteen pages including the inside covers. On those eighteen pages there are thirty-eight photographs, some of which are within a different modality (a map in one case, an extended drawing in another) which create separate interactive meanings. To apply the template used on the covers with its sixteen analytical concepts, would mean 16 times 38 separate items of analysis, i.e. 608 altogether. This would be an impossible requirement in practical terms. Even if that was an acceptable time frame there are other reasons to reject such an approach :

- The time period within which the communications analyst would work on the brochure must also include the analysis of the written text before sign-off. Bearing in mind the artefact is only one item

in a multi-factorial communications programme the time involvement needed for each visual using the long form template is out of proportion to the whole and not cost effective.

- It is suggested by Kress and van Leeuwen that a normal reading pattern for magazines, newspapers and by implication commercial brochures, is for a viewer to consider each page as a single signification. This means if the analyst examines each picture as a separate entity the resultant data would fail to capture the 'real' meaning transfer that occurs as a result of viewing the page as a whole, i.e. as one signifying item.

A further reason for combining selected questions is that when the long form template created for a single picture was pilot tested on the Toyota example, some responses to questions were similar to responses to other questions with the result that the repetitive element disguised wider implications of responses because the contextual factors were removed. The construct developed for the non-cover pages of the brochures, which I have termed the short form construct, contains twelve separate actions or questions to be applied to each double page. I have noted the Kress and van Leeuwen argument that the viewer sees at first instance a page as a single unit. In the case of a brochure a double page becomes a single signifier. The construct I have used, therefore, is as follows:

SHORT FORM CONSTRUCT

I Attention

- i) Identify Participants, Signifiers and Signifieds, plus causal relationships.
- ii) Linear Narrative and Vectoring.
- iii) Colour Classification.
- iv) Viewing Perspective, Locative Circumstances leading to Criterial Factors.

(Note that perspective of viewer, the locations and the criterial factors have now been grouped as a cluster during the attention stage).

(The polysemic classification has been moved into a commentary section requiring a tick in the boxes to identify the design as diacritical, taxonomic or lexical.)

II Interest

(The second orders of meaning are here discussed under a separate commentary section in the summary diagram and matrix (see later.)

- v) Semiotic Codes and Social Meaning (codes and meaning analysis relating to them socially, have here been combined).

The locative circumstances are included as an action attribute above. Compositional meanings now included in commentary section within later table.

III Desire and Action

- vi) Salience of Participants that encourage Action
- vii) Caption/Text Relationship
- viii) Visual Ellipsis

(Dimensional use of space is assessed under questions such as participant action, fore- grounding of criterial factors, social coding, etc.)

- ix) Non-linear Compositional Factors
- x) Deviance

In summary, the short form template is thus reduced to ten elements:

I Attention

- i) Identify Participants, Signifiers and Signifieds, plus causal relationships
- ii) Note Linear Narrative and Vectoring
- iii) Colour Classification
- iv) Viewing Perspective, Locative Circumstances leading to Criterial Factors

II Interest

- v) Semiotic Codes and Social Meaning

III Desire and Action

- vi) Salience of Participants that encourage Action
- vii) Caption/Text Relationship
- viii) Visual Ellipsis
- ix) Non-linear Compositional Factors
- x) Deviance

This short form template can now be applied to the inside covers and subsequent pages:

Attention:

- i) Identify Participants , Signifiers and Signifieds plus causal relationships

Response: The inside cover shows three participants, one human (the driver), a red saloon car (the Rover 400 series) bearing Rover name on number plate, a pair of sunglasses worn by the driver. The right-side, page one, contains three participants. They are a cluster of participants containing the Rover Group name (in a sanserif typeface), two logos (Land Rover and Rover) with an address, telephone number, etc. The cluster is framed by a thick

black horizontal bar at top of page containing, reversed out white on black, the words Rover Group (in a different typeface with serifs) and a further lower horizontal bar, also in black but with the words 'The Company in Brief' reversed out white on black, same typeface as top bar. The bar feature as used at the bottom of the page creates a lower frame to the body of text and describes the Group with an italic typeface.

ii) Linear Narrative and Vectoring

Response: The inside cover shows a red Rover 400 facing the viewer (as an implied interactive participant) slightly off centre but with wheels turned to full lock as if it is turning in at speed in front of the viewer, ready to stop and allow the viewer to enter the passenger seat. The position of the car forms a series of parallel vectors to carry the eye across to the opposite page. The third participant, the sunglasses on the driver, perform the function of an icon or symbol which embodies not only the presence of the sun but a metonym of the upmarket life style. In fact sun glasses have become in the minds of many people such as journalists, a synecdoche for high net worth social groups referred to by the media in phrases such as "The sun glasses were out in force across the Monte Carlo race track". They have become a catachrestic symbol within the meaning of this narrative. The picture, because it is one of the earliest signifiers to be viewed, is thus positioning the total brochure for those who have turned the cover. Page one

maintains its three black bars of authority which are almost funereal in the depth of their saturation. By so doing they maintain the attention of the viewer on the written text.

iii) Colour Classification

Response: The red car is shining and polished, using the two yellow fog lights to reinforce the side lamps and head lamps, although there is no fog in the rest of the picture. The immediate foreground picks up the yellow of the fog lights with its own yellow and pastel green which represents grass at the side of the road. The background, like the horizontal black bars on the opposite page, consists of black shadow with a hint of green in a high bush. The only other colours are those of the two logos. This leaves the black bars to hold the eye on the text.

iv) Viewing Perspective, Locative Circumstances and Criterial Factors

Response: The apparent movement of the car with its wheel on full lock and the driver looking towards the opposite page creates a sense of action and movement integrating the viewer as a participant. The two pages are thus viewed as one signifying unit.

The criterial factors are 'success', as if it is saying "I am in charge, things happen when I am at the wheel" or "If you want to be like

- me read the opposite page” as the driver’s eye-line takes the viewer’s eye across.

Interest

v) Semiotic Codes and Social Meaning

Response: Dealt with above. Clearly the codes reject anyone without the money to buy this car or indeed any other car in the Rover Group because the driver’s eye-line aimed at the opposite page includes by implication in the content the other Rover marques within that social coding.

Desire/Action

vi). Salience of Participants that Encourage Action

Response: The front and back covers already define the reader as either young, dynamic and adventurous (front cover) or as successful with a desire to relax from a successful lifestyle (back cover). The inside cover combines such viewer groups into one. The saloon car, the sunglasses and the full lock turn of the car wheels plus the full beam lights combine the social semiotic factors which have been used to define the viewers as they looked at the brochure, into an appeal to both types of target audience. There is an amelioration of the conflict between the meanings transferred

by the front cover and those transferred by the back cover. It could be argued however, that by this time, i.e. when the viewer might have turned the page, there had been rejection by one target cohort before lifting the brochure to examine the inside.

vii) Caption/Text Relationship

Response: The inside cover carries two short captions reversed as white into black. The first refers to the front cover MG model, as a 'return' of a classic car which 'combines design, performance and refinement'. The second refers to the Rover 400 as a 'new generation' of medium-sized cars in a 'distinctive style'. The visuals in both cases already dominate the meaning transfer and only someone who wants to identify the cars by model is likely to read the two modest captions. The brochure uses words such as 'performance', 'design', 'distinction' and 'refinement' which can be seen to create a mixture of meanings the Rover corporate positioning strategy tries to avoid, i.e. ambiguity. It does this because the marques are dissimilar in their appeal and core values (see earlier section on Rover positioning study).

viii) Visual Ellipsis

Response: The reference is to a young male driver who is portrayed as if he is single or at least lives a lifestyle as if he (note 'he' throughout the brochure) was single and makes his way in life aggressively.

ix) Non Linear Compositional Factors

Response: The only non-linear factors are the bright white spots against the black background which imply light among the trees. The aerial of the car points back to one of those lights as if to remind the viewer that the driver is moving from the dark to the light, thanks to his expensive and refined mode of transport.

x) Deviance

Response: The visual salience is such that women (except as companions), older drivers, people who prefer to relax at the wheel and those with smaller incomes are all eliminated from this two-page visual as positively as if the text said "Go Away!".

For ease of reading on pages two and three and subsequent pages the questions are not repeated.

Pages two/three:

I Attraction

- i) The two pages present seven participants (excluding the text). There are five photographs of Rover saloon models showing different marques and brands, i.e. the photographs may show a Rover 800 model as a Coupé and also as a four-door 800 Series. The Rover marque logo, which differs from the Rover Group logo, heads the left page and because it is in saturated colour will attract

the viewer's eye before it is attracted to the five photographs of the cars. The sixth participant is a series of horizontal bars now in grey, a set of signifiers in their own right.

- ii) The left side, page two, vectors to the right by means of the two saloon cars pointing from left to right and the vector effect of the horizontal bars. The right side, page three, vectors right to left for the top and bottom photographs but left to right in the centre picture. Unless it is argued the centre picture vectoring carries the eye over the page, the overall effect is indeterminate and ambiguous.
- iii) Apart from the saturated Rover red of the logo there is a consistency of colour saturation in the photographs. However, there is a variation in background levels of definition which could cause the viewer to doubt whether the photographs were taken at the same time or were assembled from photographs taken for other purposes. The first photograph shows a black saloon against a detailed backcloth of a stately home/castle type of wall. The second shows a lower score for background definition. The right page maintains the same level of definition for two pictures but a blurred background for the third picture which is intended to denote movement and speed.
- iv) The viewing perspective gazes away from the viewer thus creating a sense of objectivity. By doing this within the context of a

corporate brochure, which by its nature is attempting to impart meaning, a sense of rejection of the viewer as a participant is generated.

Apart, therefore, from the picture which uses a blurred background there is no sense of movement or action in the remaining pictures.

II Interest

- v) The codes denote the countryside, although the country house/castle wall suggests people live within its boundaries and there is thus an assumption by ellipsis of people being present but 'off camera'. The cars are positioned as stationary within a country setting with the reflection of the sun on the bodywork.

III Desire/Action

- vi) There is a salience within the first picture. It suggests the country house could be the permanent setting for anyone who buys this model. There is an iterative meaning of relaxation in the other pictures set in the countryside.
- vii) The captions perform a similar function to the caption on the front cover with the exception that they include rudimentary technical information. This meets the Tack (1993) requirement of creating a

sense of technical competence when meeting the criteria for attention. In this case such technical information has been relegated to small captions within the body of the brochure which are unlikely to be seen unless the viewer has had their attention held sufficiently to read on. Words such as: 'luxurious', 'flagship', 'executive', 'elegant', 'distinctive', 'executive qualities', 'exceptional ride' and 'handling qualities', and 'upmarket', are used in the text. Although this is not an analysis of the texts words have been assembled in order to correlate them later against words used in the key image dimensions that the board of Rover would like to see as part of their corporate positioning.

- viii) There is little ellipsis on these pages which appear to be concerned primarily with information transfer.
- ix) The non-linear compositional factors consist, except in the photograph of the wall and arch of a country house, of background countryside scenes.
- x) There is deviance because there has been little attempt to identify the viewer. This means other pages in the brochure tend to reject a viewer with insufficient money or lifestyle to become involved in the cultural and social significance of the meanings carried by the signifiers.

Pages four/five:

I Attention

- i) There are nine participants, consisting of six Rover models framed top and bottom with grey bars (the seventh participant). Reversed in white into grey are the words Product Range in the two top bars. The eighth and ninth participants are human, one male young, one female young. The heading Product Range makes it clear these pages are offering a selection, along with pages six and seven, of Rover marques. The Rover 200 series has two photographs, the Rover 100 one photograph, the MG (in different models or sub-brands) two photographs, and the Mini has one photograph.
- ii) There is no clear linear narrative although three of the photographs avoid the empty content of an undefined countryside as background. The Rover 100 is shown with a female driver in a setting that could either be a fast country road or even a race track, thus appealing to the younger more aggressive female executive. The Mini is positioned, the first photograph of the brochure to do so, in an urban setting with 'Georgian style' overtones. The white rally stripes on the bonnet of the Mini help counteract the message that this is a car for older establishment buyers.

One of the photographs of the MG is set on a steep gradient against a mountainous backcloth. The reinforcement of the front cover's sense of adventure is obvious.

- iii) The left side, page four, uses saturated red to attract attention which starts the left to right reading pattern. The four other cars in four pictures are black thus maintaining some visual cohesion at the expense of suggesting a choice of colour.
- iv) The viewing perspectives fail to speak to the viewer. Even the Rover 100 driving towards the foreground makes no attempt to suggest that the viewer should get into the car even as a passenger. There is an attempt at an international setting (an important element within the required Rover corporate positioning statement) through the use of the snow-capped mountain range.

II Interest

- v) The socio-economic class social codes are reduced. Neither of the visible drivers signifies a socio-cultural background. As stated, the Mini is set within a neo-Georgian context which might suggest the car is ideal for the son of an established upper/middle-class occupier of the house.

III Desire/Action

- vi) There are two saliently charged photographs, the picture of the Rover 100 driven by a woman with whom a female executive viewer could identify and because of the apparent speed on the open road, might suggest career success and the need to be at meetings on time. At the other extreme is the MGF on a mountain side suggesting leisure and relaxation.
- vii) The caption replicates the modality of the previous pages by offering technical information interlaced with words and phrases such as: 'stylish alternative to a saloon' (does this mean the saloon is not stylish?), 'refinement', 'new motoring concept', 'memories' (note the positioning of the Rover Group as a repository of Britain's motoring heritage, as described earlier), 'motor sport success' (ditto), 'state-of-the-art', 'stylish', and 'striking'.
- viii) The two photographs of the MG allude to their pre-war heritage of leisure enjoyment (although there is a rejection through omission of their pre-war slogan of 'Safety Fast') by positioning the models in a countryside/mountainous setting.
- ix) The non-linear compositional factors of the Georgian houses, the mountains and other country background features already discussed.
- x) There is little deviance except to show non-specific socio-cultural drivers, in one case in the cheapest model, thus reducing the

upmarket positioning of the earlier pages.

Pages six/seven:

I Attention

- i) The seven participants consist of five photographs of the Land-Rover, the logo for the Land-Rover and five grey horizontal bars. The bars contain the words Land Rover on the top left bar, Product Range on the second from top left bar and Product Range, again on the top right bar.
- ii) The two photographs on the left side, page six, point from left to right but vector downwards away from the bottom of the opposite page thus losing the directional pull used in earlier pages to carry the eye over to another page. The pictures on the right side page have no vectoral cohesion, with the two upper pictures vectoring downwards and upwards and the lower of the three, vectoring inwards with the vectors broken by professional fire fighters grouped around the vehicle.
- iii) The colour classification shows four vehicles in white, and one in red (again using the red to draw the eye on the left hand page) to start the reading pattern. The red is picked up by the firemen's uniforms in the right bottom picture. The colour used provides an aesthetic balance.

- iv) The viewing perspective is one of 'semi-detachment' in the case of three vehicles which appear to be parked left to right ready for entry or use by the viewer. The right side vehicle middle photograph has been placed in rough country as has the lower right side vehicle which is being used by professional fire-fighters. The double page criterial factors are created by the contrast of comfortable country house settings with rough country and professional usage. The horizontal bars again frame the sets of photographs to ensure a commitment to them by the viewer.

II Interest

- v) The class-oriented social codes as noted above, position the vehicles in 'establishment' country settings or tough country. It is thus made clear these are not decorative machines. There is a deviance question noted below.

III Desire/Action

- vi) The salience of the participants has been created by virtue of the double meaning of country style comfort with tough rugged professional usage, thus using the professional fire-fighters to create a sense of reliability for those users who may only use their vehicle for shopping.
- vii) The caption/text relationship lays emphasis on the technical capabilities of the vehicles alongside their stated luxury. The captions contain less superlative adjectives with words such as

'improvements', 'world-wide use', and public utility usage.

- viii) The visual ellipsis is created through the use of humans in one photograph. This tends to emphasise their absence in the other photographs on these pages. The country home setting contains socio-cultural signifiers but does not include the people who will be using the vehicle. By doing this it could be said, however, that the vehicles are waiting to be taken over and driven by the viewer.
- ix) The linear and non-linear compositional factors in the three country house settings frame the vehicle and force the eye down onto the participant.
- x) The deviance factor is that there are three luxury settings and one intermediate rugged setting which is signifying it is rough ground. The final utility picture makes it clear this is a converted vehicle for tough work. However, the emphasis on the luxury settings may detract from any message the marketing department is trying to project that this marque is a tough workmanlike machine to be used by tough workmen.

Pages eight/nine:

I Attention

- i) There are three participants, two of which consist of a block of text on left-hand page, framed by another participant, the grey

bar at the top and bottom of the containing reversed out white on grey typography which carries the words Company and Product Awards. The third participant group is the two photographs of vehicles on the right side page top, framed by the grey bars. Both vehicles face away from the viewer with one picture showing a red Rover 600 Diesel and the other a red Range Rover.

- ii) There is little linear narrative except to show the action of two vehicles driving away from the viewer, with the awards for 'Best Big Family Diesel' and 'Off-roader of the Year'. The two vehicles point inwards as if to create a sense of one family.
- iii) The colour classification is to use red again but this carries the eye to the right hand page top and thus makes it an effort to move left to view a list of awards with no descriptive support except the name of the award.
- iv) No demand is made on the viewer by the visuals as the cars appear to be driving away from the viewer. Kress and van Leeuwen have made the point (p.145, fig 4.15) in describing the case of a picture of two parents walking away from the viewer thus creating a 'turning of the back' on the authors (or sign-makers) of the picture. It is also an admittance of vulnerability which could imply a measure of trust and therefore involvement. There is a dichotomy of meaning in pictures of the type offered on the Rover brochure where non-human participants are involved

which generates its own ambiguity.

II Interest

- v) The right-hand page photograph of a Land Rover is positioned as driving towards a large country house which may be an institution (a potential purchasing target for this model and marque). In the case of the Rover 600 the vehicle is shown driven into the country (by the family?), except there are no humans visible, so an important opportunity for meaning transfer is missed.

III Desire/Action

- vi) The two pages rely entirely on the written text for salience and the projection of the criterial factors. The saloon which purports to be '1995 Best Big Family Diesel' shows no humans nor suggestion as to why diesel has any advantage for a family, while the vehicle which has won the '1995 Off-roader of the Year' is shown in the manicured grounds of a large country house.
- vii) The caption/text relationship has been omitted.
- viii) There is ellipsis because the family is assumed in one case and the off-road territory in another.
- ix) There are no relevant non-linear factors.

- x) The deviance, however, is strong for the reason that the two award-winning cars appear to forsake the purpose for which they were given awards,

Pages ten/eleven:

I Attention

- i) This is a single spread across the two centre pages. There are a number of participants: six photographs of different Rover models, set with texts which list countries where Rover has organisations. All are overprinted across a soft focus map of the world with selected regions enclosed within squares.
- ii) The participant narrative is created by a series of action oriented photographs where vehicles climb mountainous terrains, drive across deserts or stand in front of comfortable private residences.
- iii) The colours are relatively unsaturated (see code scoring later) with a clear lack of definition in the case of the world map which has been coloured in green and yellow.

II Interest

- iv) The viewing perspectives vary. In some cases the vehicles are driving in international or leisure terrain's with an invitation to take the place of the driver or at least join in. Where a driver is present they are culturally and socially non-specific.

III Desire/Action

- v) The salience is clear. The top grey bar with the lower bar frame the map and carry the message in white reversed out on grey, 'Rover Group's World-wide Operations' which, with the map and the multi-site positioning of the vehicles, suggest the words "we are an international organisation which sells into every territory in the world", without specifically naming visually each region.
- vi) The caption/text relationship lists every country where Rover organisations exist using words that proclaim the automotive industry as global and therefore so is the Rover Group by connotation. Words and phrases such as 'specialist', 'technological partnerships' (which refer to the Group's positioning requirements) and 'joint ventures' are used.
- vii) There is no visual ellipsis except in the case of four out of the six vehicles which do not have a driver.
- viii) The non-linear compositional factors signified on the world map accentuate the literal framing of the pictures many of which are of geographical regions.
- ix) There are no deviant factors present.

Pages twelve/thirteen:

I Attention

- i) There are nine participants consisting of six photographs with variations in content, copy, the use of a drawing and the ubiquitous grey horizontal bars. Where motor vehicles are present, as in three cases, the car no longer takes the superordinate position. The left side top picture shows cars rolling off an assembly line, the next picture shows an aerial photograph of vehicles at a sales point in a distributor's building, the third shows a single vehicle on the forecourt of a large distributor's premises. The fourth left hand picture is of a newly built modern building with no designation but has to be assumed to be a showroom otherwise why is the picture included?

To the right there is a photograph of executives, probably under training in a seminar room with a range of AV aids in use. At the side of the picture is a separate participant, a line drawing of a face emanating from a picture. The sixth picture shows a technician testing a vehicle with what appears to be computer driven test equipment to his left. The last two participants consist of the ever present grey bars, this time with the top left bar carrying the words Rover Group's Worldwide Operations. The texts do not relate directly to the visuals but talk of worldwide operations developing new partnerships, and the training efforts of the Rover Learning Business (I have described this concept in the chapter (III) devoted to the positioning of the Group).

- ii) Each picture offers its own vectoring without an overall context. The cars on the production line appear to be moving from right to left into the left hand corner, the aerial shot of the second picture uses the road as a framing device for the distributor's forecourt while the third picture uses the top of the distributor's building to frame downwards into the space (empty apart from one car) in front of the building. The modern building in picture four left side maintains its own vectors which meet at a corner right of centre foreground and signifies little about either the building or its contents. The training picture vectors towards the teacher using one side wall to reduce the operating area. Similarly there is vectoring content where the technician is testing a vehicle drawing the eye to the centre screen of the test equipment. This reinforces the technical/intellectual high ground element of the positioning requirements.
- iii) All colours are pastel shades with no predominant primary colour. The multiplicity of the colours in each photograph create a kaleidoscope of colour with no clear meaning transfer derived from its use.
- iv) The viewing perspectives vary in their meaning. The top left picture takes the eye into the distance without using the given and new relationship. There is a connotation which suggests the front car is passing the viewer. The aerial positioning places the viewer

into the high angle shot thus reducing involvement.

The third left picture draws the viewer's eye into an empty space while the fourth picture fails to draw the viewers gaze to the entrance because the corner of the building takes possession of the eye line. The right side teaching picture draws the viewer into the student audience. This creates an identification with them and so recognises the connoted authority for the teacher who by implication is a member of the Rover staff. The same effect is created by the technical testing picture. Here the technician and viewer become one in completing the technical (assume 'quality') checks.

II Interest

- v) The social codes tend to position the viewer within an employee role as a viewer of property, the membership of a learning group or as a technician testing a vehicle. The socio-cultural elements clearly make an appeal to the hands-on manager who wants to feel more than an onlooker but wants to take part in the process of managing the company. There could be doubt as to whether such a viewer would be listed within the cohort of stakeholders normally (see earlier) forming part of a corporate positioning target audience. It could be argued, however, that such a viewer would be included as a possible future member of staff thus enabling the brochure to be used as part of the Rover recruitment literature.

III Desire/Action

- vi) There is a salience which suggests Rover is an organisation with which the viewer can feel involved. If that viewer, as a stakeholder, is a distributor then three of the pictures resonate and if a worker as stakeholder, then there is one picture of the shop floor that can also resonate. Other managers in the company as stakeholder viewers, will know they are within a learning organisation and because of the last picture be involved at a technical level
- vii) The captions are loosely connected to the pictures through their subject matter. Like other pages in the brochure the small italic typeface does not encourage reading but the visuals speak for themselves with only a minor requirement for positioning the subject through the texts.
- viii) There is a visual ellipsis whereby the factory line appears to have no workers, the photograph of a distributor in one case shows only one car and the image of the company is generated and projected through the architectural quality of the building. This is a strange contextual association which bears no direct relationship to the positioning ingredients of the Group.
- ix) All pictures are well composed in aesthetic terms but fail where stated above to transfer the corporate meaning requirements.

- x) The deviance is in the visual grammar and lack of precision in structure of four out of the six pictures.

Pages fourteen/fifteen:

I Attention

- i) There are seven visual participants. Three take the form of photographs, two of them technical photographs of the engine, the third a shot of the robotic assembly of a vehicle. The grey horizontal bars carry the following words reversed white into grey: top left side Engine Technology and the Environment, the top right side Rover Group Performance Statistics, the second bar carries the words Rover Group and the UK Economy and the third bar says Rover Group Locations. Each of these bars are separate participants. They are the equivalent of televisual positioning shots which give subject associations for a picture. They have no associated captions.
- ii) The top left picture contains vectors by virtue of the shape of the engine and the same applies to the use of the engine to provide vectoring from top to bottom. The third picture vectors from bottom left to top right.
- iii) The use of red as an attention gainer is used for the top left picture with the second and third using the colour blue to carry

the eye from the left page to the right.

- iv) The viewing perspectives are from a high angle downwards onto three technical processes.

II Interest

- v) There is no overt social coding, although semiotically the content of the three pictures suggests the company uses modern techniques such as robotics, and is clean and efficient in terms of its manufacturing processes.

III Desire/Action

- vi) The salience of the participants is to establish a technical validity to the corporate argument.
- vii) The caption/text relationship reinforces the visual message. Words and phrases are used such as: 'the heart of the car is its engine', 'advanced', 'innovative', 'outstanding and refinement'. This is the second time the word 'refinement' (placed also in the text as a descriptor of the Rover car) is used in relation to engineering refinement. Other words and phrases in the supporting text are: 'cleaner engine emissions', 'lead-free paint processes', 'elimination of waste by-products', along with other technical descriptions. The performance statistics relate to sales and there are statements

concerning the Rover contribution to the UK economy and the range of sites in the UK Birmingham area.

- viii) The visual ellipsis continues with no human workers in view. Does the viewer assume the total process is robotically driven?
- ix) There are no non-linear compositional factors.
- x) Deviance exists in the subject variables of these two pages which include 'the environment', 'engine technology', 'sales figures for the Group', 'the contribution of the Rover Group to the UK economy' and its 'contribution to local employment'. This unconnected range of subjects is contained on two pages within three visuals.

Pages sixteen/seventeen (inside back cover):

I Attention

- i) There are five participants, four as pictures, the fifth being the continuing group of grey top and bottom bars, the upper of which carries the words in white reversed out Rover Group Locations. The top left picture is captioned and shows a line of Land Rovers being produced in their factory. The second left picture shows a robotic process working on the Rover 600 while the third shows automated body pressing at another factory. The fourth

photograph fills the inside cover and shows the Land Rover parked beside a country stream with a bridge over the stream.

- ii) There are two linear narratives. The left page concentrates on the manufacturing process albeit in different locations (known only if captions are read), whereas the right side cover photograph positions the Land Rover in a country setting.
- iii) The colour classification styles divide between two opposing pages. There is a predominance of the colour yellow in two production-based photographs with white as the predominant colour in the third picture. The right-hand inside cover picks out the yellow as the unbroken colour for the sky showing above a black coloured set of trees which change tone to grey for the stone bridge and a slate colour for the roadway on which the vehicle stands. The vehicle is black.
- iv) The viewing angles gaze directly at the viewer for the top factory photograph thus ensuring the viewer relates to the front vehicle as perhaps metaphorically their own, the second picture's gaze takes a three-quarter angled position with the robotically controlled new car moving past in front of the viewer. The third picture positions the viewer higher than the machinery looking down as if from an internal factory bridge. The right side picture again positions the viewer slightly higher than the vehicle which appears to be waiting for the viewer to take possession.

II Interest

- v) The three left side pictures position the viewer as outside the manufacturing process as if viewing the factory as a visitor, while the right side picture assumes the viewer to own the new Range Rover (see caption). Thus, in both social semiotic and critical discourse terms the text chooses and defines the viewer as a member of a high net worth socio-economic class.

III Desire/Action

- vi) There is a salience and narrative created on these two pages which implies the viewer is visiting the factory, looking it over and then driving off in their own Land Rover.
- vii) The captions are specific. Each left side picture needs a caption to identify where the factory is situated and why the picture is there.
- viii) There is no ellipsis as the viewer has become a participant.
- ix) The non-compositional factor of the yellow on the right side picture is there to carry the eye from the left to the right. It performs no other function. It suggests evening or night whereas the foreground is sufficiently light for daytime.
- x) There is no deviance factor.

For the sake of completeness before testing the short and long form

construct within a comparative context, I cross checked elements of the data obtained from the 1995 edition by applying the critical discourse template developed earlier.

TEMPLATE FOR CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

i) Defining the Visual Discourse

An attempt to separate the function of each visual item as a function in itself from the function which occurs because of the context within which it takes place. In the process it thus separates the discourse occurring within that social or power situation and the discourse within society as a whole.

Visual items consist of red MGF sport car (no driver visible). The signifiers can be divided as to the MG insignia in place of registration plate which signifies it is a manufacturer's car and not privately owned nor being held by the distributor. The viewer is thus placed in a buyer/seller position and the historical context (pre-war motor racing and competitive hill climbs) loses some of the positive impact that would have occurred if the car appeared to be privately owned. The colour red with its implications mentioned earlier (van Walsham (unpublished), Hope, A. and Walsh, M. 1990, Holtzchue, L. 1995, Jakobson 1968, et al) in that red and blue are consistently chosen as favourite colours under research conditions and that red is seen as a colour of emotional arousal. As Hodge and Kress (1999 edition, p.104) said, quoting Mary Quant, red is seen in terms of raw energy, pushy, gutsy, etc.

The background is one of hilly unfenced land and as such signifies open country in contrast to fenced farmland or cultivated park/gardens used for other visual settings in the brochure for other marques within the Rover range. The signified meaning is leisure, adventure, getting away from work, enjoyment through breaking out of the normal bounds of everyday life. The combination of rugged country and sports car offers a different signification from, for example, the back cover, which shows a stationary saloon overlooking equally rugged country but within a softer more relaxing mood.

Comment: It will be seen that by separating the signifiers from the context, additional signification and transfer of association occurs. It can be said that this reductionist approach does, where the time frame permits, dissect out additional meaning. The socio-cultural setting, like other visuals in the brochure, is redolent of a middle-class lifestyle.

ii) The Sign-maker Discourse

Sign-makers are working as members of a social and cultural discourse affected by definition by what has gone before. Only discrete research would identify the extent to which their work or home environment provides them with their primary reference group in opinion former terms (Watts1970, pp.26-33 and Watts

1977, pp.15-24). Commercial graphic designers, creative directors and photographers specialising in corporate 'picture making' exist within a relatively defined discourse. The majority of designers although briefed by clients/departments heads who are not within their discourse, carry the cultural and mental attitudes they absorb at art school. They see themselves as thought leaders in the field of visual design and as such tend to compromise their own encoding process with that of the people briefing them.

In the case of the Rover brochures the designer/creative directors are living within a double discourse of the automotive industry (their image of Rover marque cars will carry the meanings from a one-hundred-year discourse of motor vehicle image making) with the contrasting 'modern leading edge' discourse of their art-oriented profession. In the case of the cover the traditional image of the sports car on the open road has been maintained from that discourse. Inside the brochure however, there is an outdated view of middle-class ABC1 lifestyles shown by their consistent selection of the signifying context of country houses and non-urban life, possible because the sign-makers move within a different discourse and therefore maintain an architypical view of the target customer's lifestyle.

iii) First and Second Orders of Meaning

The first order of meaning may dominate the first association of

the viewer with the text but later, as further consideration is given by the viewer, there appears to be a process by which a second order of meaning occurs. The question is whether this linguistic concept applies to visual meaning? If so, can we associate it with the process of commercial communications and the orders of meaning that are used to transfer corporate messages? I believe it does and we can. First and Second orders of meaning were discussed under the core constructs. The first order of meaning regarding the cover showing a sports car *per se* offers a second order which can be summed up as a suggestion to the viewer in the colloquial phrase “to get a life”. The visual design of a sports car driving fast away from the pressures of daily work is suggesting that even if the ‘daily use car’ is a saloon offered by the company (according to the Institute of Directors Information Service “sales to business customers account for around 70% of the new car market in any given year” (fax to RW 29 August 2001) the weekend car can be one that enables the target viewer to ‘break out’.

iv) Interactive Power Play

Mention has been made of the interplay of power between viewer and signmaker. To help in the identification of that interplay can we identify interactional control? Who, for example started the viewer/signmaker exchange, who ended it? Will the brochure be

obtained by the reader through a visit to an automotive distributor, through a phone call or letter, or by means of a regular mail shot? How does the sign-maker initiate each topic in the artefacts they produce and do they differ with each stakeholder target group? Unlike the process by which meaning is transferred in the case of advertisements and sales promotion literature, there is a difference when corporate material is in play. The viewer may still need the attention to be caught but there is already a desire for the information, albeit not necessarily from that company or brand. In the case of the Toyota analysis there was an action interplay as the viewer took a position of power by asking for information or by picking up a brochure in an office or show room. The viewer then moved into a subordinate role as the company representative transferred information. The viewer is not necessarily a potential buyer in corporate situations. They could be members of parliament, university academics from automotive design and research departments, representatives from the more general business infrastructure, distributors of that company's products or even local politicians interested in the company as an employer. As the company representatives pass information they take a superordinate power position as the viewer or goal participant assumes the role of student. Then, depending on the objective of the dialogue the power moves back to the goal participant or remains with the company representative. Corporate brochures frequently fail to take into account the variety of targets they are addressing as they may use the first order participant as

an intermediary. This can be seen in the case of distributors who may themselves become salespeople to their customers at a later stage in the communication chain.

The cover is presenting a new product in such a way that the meaning can be passed on to constituents (if an MP), customers (if a distributor), students (if an academic) or influence attitudes to the company (if an investment analyst). For this reason the cover is restricting the breadth of information to the target group by emphasising one product which does not reflect the broader positioning of the Group's positioning requirements to the exclusion of those marques which more accurately reflect such ingredients.

v) Historicity and Critical Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is not a 'snapshot' of social and cultural interactions taking place during one moment in time. There is a historicity present in the discourse by which the images in visual communication refer to, or are the product of, earlier images which themselves grew from their antecedents. The area of corporate identity is a cauldron of such intertextuality where art, applied design and corporate logo systems cross reference. There are three historically centred items on the cover: the car with its logo, the logo of Land Rover and the logo of the Rover marque. The background historicity connected with MG is, as stated earlier,

considerable and goes back to the first MG (produced by Morris Garages in 1923 and followed by years of speed records, racing and rally successes). This is what the marque consists of and is suggested in the brochure. The Rover logo is even older and can be traced back (see appendix Exhibit B on the history of the Rover company) to the final years of the nineteenth century (1896) when the company was launched. There is a long tradition of respectable, middle-class associations by the company throughout its long life especially during the 1930s and post war years. The Land Rover with its post-war associations (it was based on the concept of the Wiley Jeep (see appendix Exhibit B) and has since assumed a dominating position in its market. By using a reductionist approach through the application of elements within the discipline of critical discourse to cross check, time is concentrated on the responses to questions such as those on historical perspective and the interactive processes which take place as a result of the discourses within which the sign-makers exist and encode their work.

vi) The Visual Lexis

A visual lexis opens a discussion on the paradigmatic process and how it informs our understanding of the influences on the sign-maker. As part of the process CDA can be used to consider this lexis of items that were used by the sign-maker. There is a need to itemise visual ingredients as signifiers without context,

even assuming their signified meaning may change when considered within context. In comparison with other pages in the brochure, or in comparison with similar brochures produced at another time, the mere comparison of the visual vocabulary transfers its own meaning. Earlier (page 202, Figures 7 and 8) the ethnographic paradigm choice tables were shown with data from the Toyota analysis. In Figure 11, (next page) the table is in completed form with data drawn from the Rover analysis. At the moment of conception the signmaker can avoid a negative second order of meaning if a lexicon is created which relates directly to the corporate positioning requirement instead of responding to suggestions from other department heads who may have different agendas.

vii) The Role of Metalanguage

In linguistics the concept of metalanguage describes a reference to other expressions (i.e. outside the immediate effect of that written word or sentence). It is “literally, a language about language” (O’Sullivan, et al 1994). It is a way of talking or thinking about texts. In doing this, metalanguage makes its own statement about the writer. In a visual context, we cannot refer to a visual metalanguage but we can consider the process by which a paradigmatic selection is made by the sign-maker which *establishes* the visual genre that was selected. The act of retelling through the use of the same or similar images in sequential

pictures involves the sign-maker in an element of control. The act of retelling and the context within which it takes place along with its visual structure and use of vectors creates its own transfer of meaning within those visual structures. I would suggest that the process of retelling and by implication the element of control this creates describes a process by which sign-makers generate their own language. In a similar manner, although not a metalanguage, I have attempted here to find a system suitable for talking about visual language by the use of the templates and constructs which create their own process.

viii) Visual Cohesion and Linkage

In linguistics there are certain words which create a cohesion not by repetition so much as by their own meaning. These are words such as 'therefore', 'because' 'but'. Apart from the normal conjunctions however, they are situations where an assumption is made about something that went before. It is my argument that in the visual such cohesive functions can be performed through the repetition of a small element within a picture or by metonymic icons or symbols which position the total picture or continue the narrative by reference to a whole. Earlier a list was developed of words, such as 'refinement', 'stylish', 'elegant', 'luxurious', 'upmarket', 'distinctive style' (twice) that were used either with reference to the models or to the wider culture and philosophy of the company, within the texts. Such meanings have been used by

CORPORATE ETHNOGRAPHY (ROVER)
(Paradigm Choices)

MESSAGE FORMS AVAILABLE	*SUPRA-SENTENTIAL STRUCTURE (How many genre <u>could</u> have been used – conceptual and physical) to carry message	WHAT ARE THE RULES OF INTERPRETATION (Which Given items have a given integration/comms value	GOVERNING NORMS (For this type of interaction)
1. Total corporate (holistic) as one consistent message – especially as brochure has dealer readers using symbols/icons, montages, etc.	Within primary genre the brochure could have been A4 (normal size for corporate brochures) hard spine (to give presence and metonymic suggestion of size of Group).	The dealer target audiences see many similar competitor brochures. They will note minor differentiating factors yet will only accept the genre within their own arbitrary limits.	The dealer audience will expect to see product but will “read” or negotiate meanings from the environmental and product positioning in the visuals as a guide to likely advertising and marketing support from the manufacture.
2. PRODUCT TECHNICALITIES – dealers need full specifications.	In secondary genre, videos and Internet were available.		
3. DESIGN Rover has new “world class” state of art design centre – relate this as group to all product marques.	Content had option to concentrate on corporate attributes with less emphasis on products.		
4. HANDLING This is a partially used message through position of products on road (see text) but no support for “acknowledged leader” claim.			

*Name where possible MYTHS & CONNOTATIONS GENERATED BY Sign Systems.

the sign-maker for visual expression in more than seven cases, with other partial visual references as when the background is a manicured lawn or hedge of the type found in a country house parkland.

Equally, on the front cover the primary setting (as the first contact of the brochure with the viewer) of a rugged country background is later linked to the use of mountainous settings (MG) and rough wooded ground (Land Rover) to emphasise cohesion and relationships. This has similar connotations to the use of words such as 'therefore' 'because' 'but' to create linguistic linkages. The final page and inside cover of the brochure suggests the viewer is visiting the factory to see the processes and a new Land Rover is waiting for the visitor to take possession. Critical discourse analysis can be applied to the pages within a brochure where ambivalent responses have occurred and cross checking can provide extra data.

In the next chapter I comment on the need for communications teams to be trained in social semiotic techniques and in critical discourse analysis. My later comments on what appear to be general trends within both the Rover, and indeed the Toyota, texts suggest this is a more generalised problem than just within the brochures under analysis.

Three test situations have now been completed:

- The application of selected social semiotic and critical discourse concepts to a single photograph in a Toyota corporate brochure.
- An analysis has been completed which involves an amended set of concepts (long form) based on the above, to the front cover and back cover of a Rover Group corporate brochure. This widened the application because it included a full page with its obvious polysemic implications. It involved a simplified set of questions. The template was divided into three clusters based around the belief that even in corporate commercial communications the attention of the viewer must first be caught, then interest created and finally a desire for action suggested. My aim was to ask questions within the chronology of A (Attention) I (Interest) and DA (Desire leading to Action) as to the extent of an underlying meaning transfer which can be compared to the needs of the directors of the company concerned.
- A reduced template in the short form was applied to a complete Rover brochure with the exception of the front and back covers to which the long form construct was applied.

Earlier (Figure 9) I showed a blank table entitled AIDA Summary. The table can now be completed by insertion of data obtained from the analytical work. The form has been completed as Figure 10 where it contains an abbreviated form of the template data. It will be seen it provides easy reference against the positioning dimensions and forms the basis for further analysis and comparisons. It is possible for practitioners to compare the results of the text with other texts that are in use or being produced by the company. The next section suggests a process for making the comparison.

Comparative Analysis with other Communications Artefacts

The need for comparative analysis with earlier or later brochures can be important if the practitioner wishes to maintain continuity. This will, however, add time to what is already a tight schedule for the department manager. The technique is unlikely to be used, therefore, unless a technique is designed that identifies quickly where further examination or analysis is needed. In this section I suggest such a process. To reduce time involvement the process consists of an application of a short form construct for part of the brochure (front and back covers) supported by a simple checking system for the remainder. There are many reasons why managers may wish to compare the artefact under consideration with similar examples. The reason could be:

- A continuity check on the development of a communications programme for an agreed positioning over a defined time frame. Positioning

programmes are sometimes supported by a message strategy where selected elements are projected over perhaps a twelve month period and further elements added or used to replace the first set of meanings during a second and third year. There could be a need to reach significant layers of opinion formers and thought leaders before widening the communications process to the public. Or, the message may be so prolix it is unlikely to be understood except after a period of elapsed time.

- To compare with earlier editions of the same piece of literature to ensure continuity of meaning within the discourse, as with annual reports and accounts.
- To compare a range of synchronically produced pieces of literature or corporate film which although in a different mode or style must speak with a similar meaning.
- As an element in the analysis of a competitor whereby a similar purpose brochure produced by another company needs to be analysed not only for AIDA reasons, i.e. competition for attention in situations such as in exhibitions or seminars, but to create a matrix of meanings which by gap analysis will enable the company to create its own first and second orders of meaning while competing within a similar positioning environment.

The emphasis of the comparative process differs from the previous three templates where the objective of the practitioner was to decide whether the artefact fulfils its aims in terms of the AIDA model and its relationship with

FIGURE 9

TITLE OF FACTS OR FIGURES		AIDA SUMMARY (DOUBLE PAGE)		
BROCHURE				
DATES:	ANAL. DATE:			
PAGE (S)	FRONT/BACK COVERS INSIDE COVERS PAGES 1-18			
FIRST ORDER MEANING (VISUAL ONLY)		SECOND ORDER MEANING (VISUAL ONLY)	CRITICAL DISCOURSE AN TEMPLATE	
Polysemic Classification:		<div>CORPORATE IMAGE DIMENSIONS</div> <div>SUMMARY OF TEMPLATE ANALYSIS</div> <div>COMMENTARY</div>		
DIACRITICAL	<input type="checkbox"/>			
TAXONOMIC	<input type="checkbox"/>			
LEXICAL	<input type="checkbox"/>			

FIGURE 10

TITLE OF BROCHURE		FACTS OR FIGURES	
DATES: 1995		ANAL.DATE: 2001	
PAGE (S)		FRONT/BACK COVERS INSIDE COVERS PAGES 1-18	

AIDA SUMMARY (DOUBLE PAGE)

FIRST ORDER MEANING (VISUAL ONLY)		SECOND ORDER MEANING (VISUAL ONLY)		CRITICAL DISCOURSE A TEMPLATE	
<p>The Rover Group is a British company (21:5 Visual Presence) that on first sight has two predominant marques (Land-Rover and Rover) assumes MG also, but no logo on front cover, assumes Mini, also no logo.</p> <p>The company has a worldwide network which is not emphasised (1:7). It presents an aggressive image with an appeal to ABC₁ socio-economic and cultural target audience with emphasis on under thirty males and possibly under thirty female executives. There is a second priority interest in the middle-aged family white male who wants relaxed driving.</p> <p>Its target audiences (of all above psychographic groups) are predominantly interested in the country or live in country-based houses.</p> <p>Polysemic Classification:</p> <p>DIACRITAL <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>TAXONOMIC <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>LEXICAL <input type="checkbox"/></p>		<p>The Rover Group is very conscious of its history and heritage with its pre-war values. This, through the sign-maker, reflects a corporate culture that gazes backwards and has out-dated views on management. This is supported by the out-of-date view of its up-market target audience as living in the country, probably in large country estates.</p> <p>The company's "get a life" sense of control suggests an inflexible approach to stake-holder relations also. A company that is difficult to deal with.</p>		<p>The sign-makers move within two discourses where the CORPORATE AUTOMOTIVE DISOURSE DOMINATES.</p> <p>Their out-dated socio cultural view of modern middle to up-market life which tends to be urban dominated is a further reflection of a corporate culture which is equally out-of-date and out of touch with its audiences.</p>	
<p>CORPORATE IMAGE DIMENSIONS</p> <p>i) British (in models)</p> <p>ii) International outlook</p> <p>iii) People orientate Management</p> <p>iv) Products that embody company heritage</p> <p>v) Holds the intellectual high ground</p>		<p>SUMMARY OF TEMPLATE ANALYSIS</p> <p>i) A company embedded in its history of the past successes of its marques. Sells overseas but not a truly international company</p> <p>ii) Second orders of meaning and CDA both suggest a company that is inflexible, difficult to do business with.</p> <p>iii) Out-dated view of target audience psychographics</p> <p>iv) Advanced use of robotics and high tech processes.</p> <p>v)</p>		<p>COMMENTARY</p> <p>i) Meets Corporate positioning requirement.</p> <p>ii) Fails to fulfil corporate strategy</p> <p>iii) Fails to project required management style and culture</p> <p>iv) Projects its own view of its heritage</p> <p>v) Meets positioning requirements.</p>	

corporate policy. The comparative examination may certainly be to assess effectiveness within the AIDA model but it can also be concerned with the possibility of variations in meanings which have taken place, possibly unconsciously, in other similar artefacts and how this might reflect on company policy. I have taken an holistic approach as this allows the practitioner to compare first the two artefacts in terms of size, number of pages, quality of materials, etc. and secondly it takes the practitioner through a series of basic questions drawn from the core constructs. If, for example, my objective had been to investigate changes in the company's communications processes, it would have been instructive to use the long form template on each of the three editions of the brochure or indeed any other artefact. My objective, however, was to focus on the development of a methodology that will meet the requirements of day-to-day practitioners by identifying new information unlikely to be gained by managers schooled only in the written or literary tradition of business communications. My approach, therefore, is to:

- i) Examine the materiality and modularity of the new brochure in its totality, i.e. size, weight of paper, overall structure, graphics system, etc. and compare with what we will now refer to as the 'core brochure' to signify the edition or version against which the additional artefact is being compared.
- ii) Apply a newly developed question construct to the front and back covers only (see later for content).
- iii) Complete a new questionnaire that requires confirmation of

variations which occur in other pages including the inside front and back covers.

- iv) Use where necessary the appropriate short or long form template and apply to those points in the brochure where the communications analyst considers there are significant variations in meaning transfer and which might distort corporate positioning requirements.

The reasons for item i) are because the analyst can immediately ascertain whether there are major changes or whether, as in the case of the Rover brochures, there have only been minor alterations. Item ii) consists of a shorter comparative construct which utilises questions from the short form construct but includes selected items from the CDA template. This is to be used when greater detail is required for the identification of participants and signifiers. This stage in the process is concerned only with the front and back covers where the attention factor in the AIDA model plays an important role. I made an assumption that the delivery system for the artefact or the means by which the sign-maker opens the dialogue is the same as for the core artefact with which it is compared. If the artefact is to be used in a different situation, perhaps as a reply document to specific enquiries or at a discussion seminar where the document is already accepted as a document for detailed reading, then the analyst will take the decision to apply the comparative template or the long form construct. The purpose of item iii) is for the analyst to read the artefact as would a member of their target group and note where changes have taken place. It is thus in a fast 'tick-the-box' format whereby changes are quickly noted, possibly for discussion with colleagues.

An example of the format in blank shown on the next page as Figure 12 is a reminder to the analyst to use the full templates where ambivalence occurs. Depending upon the significance of the changes either in relation to required positioning, or because it is a competitor artefact and data from the analysis is to be used for gap analysis, then the analyst will make a decision as to whether or not to use the long form construct.

The comparative construct divides into two sections, the first corresponding to item one above and the second relating to the AIDA model as follows:

COMPARATIVE CONSTRUCT

1. Comparative Overview

- a) Materiality Analysis, i.e. format size, type of paper (cover and pages), binding comparison
- b) Page and Visual Count (visuals to consist of defined items plus commentary for non-specific design such as text backgrounds, drawings, etc.)
- c) Overall Graphic System Differences, i.e. typeface and design features.

Apply the following to double pages (or in the case of the cover, front and back) as in previous applications:

1. Attention

- i) Identify Participant, Signifiers and Signifieds plus causal relationships.
- ii) Define the Visual Discourse by separating the function of each visual item as a function from the function within its context
- iii) Note Vectoring and Linear Narrative
- iv) Interactive Power Play. How did the interaction process begin, who started the viewer/sign-maker exchange, how was the brochure obtained?
- v) Colour Classifications
- vi) The Visual Lexis and Paradigmatic Choices, continue into the following pages and consider within a total brochure matrix

III Interest

- vii) Consider Viewing Perspective, Locative Circumstances and Criterial Factors
- viii) Identify Codes and Social Meanings
- ix) Historicity and Orders of Discourse

IV Desire/Action

- x) Salience of Participants, their Codes and what are First and Second Orders of Meanings
- xi) Caption/Text Relationship, list Criterial Words and Compare
- xii) What are the Visual Cohesion, Compositional Factors and Ellipsis?

Application of Comparative Construct to 1996 Rover Brochure

This construct is applied to the 1996 edition of the Rover *Facts and Figures* brochure. Following completion the check list is shown completed as Figure 13.

COMPARATIVE CONSTRUCT

I Comparative Overview

- a) Materiality Analysis, i.e. format size, type of paper (cover and pages), binding comparison

Response: Format, page size and type of paper/card plus binding, unchanged from 1995.

- b) Page and visual count (page count to include front/back cover

and inside front/back cover separately. The visual count to include total number of specific photographs or other types of picture. Non-specific designs such as text backgrounds drawings, etc. to receive comment).

Response: Back/front cover plus inside back/front cover plus 16 pages.

- c) Overall Graphic System Differences, i.e. typeface and design features

Response: Graphic system the same but with changes in content within the structure.

Apply following to each successive double page (or in case of cover front and back) as in previous applications responding to each question from each page.

II Attention

- i) Identify Participant, Signifiers and Signifieds, plus causal relationships

Response: Cover participants have changed within a similar graphics structure.

Additional participants and changed positions consist of:

- Four Royal Charter insignias at top of page.
- Title of brochure brought to head of page but beneath Rover Group name.
- Change in date to 1996.
- Bottom of page beneath centre photograph carries three logos - Rover, Land Rover and MG.

Note change of size of photograph. In 1995 the picture occupied three-quarters of page, bled off at top with total dimensions of 4.5 inches by 3.5 inches whereas the photograph in 1996 is reduced to a square of 2.5 inches.

The back cover shows 'a top of the range' Rover 800 thus establishing both extremes of models on front and back cover. The black saloon is positioned against a soft focus large country house which occupies the width of the picture.

- ii) Define the Visual Discourse by separating the function of each visual items as a function from the function within its context

The inclusion of the four Royal charters reinforces the "we are a top people's" car with the gap between the charter insignias and the name Rover Group closed to a single space thus suggesting a

single syntagm with the Group and Royalty as one. The photograph, now less dominant, has acquired a balance with other participants. We thus have an acceptance of the above syntagm visualised through a saloon car (the Rover 200, a small Rover). The saloon is red and driven by a middle-class ABC1 woman in her twenties. The car is right-hand drive on a country road with soft focus bushes behind suggesting movement.

iii) Note Vectoring and Linear Narrative

All signs with the exception of the Rover car logo have been blocked to the left margin. The car is driving towards the viewer at the same angle as the MG in the previous year but more turned away. There is no demand or invitation to the viewer.

iv) Interactive Power Play. How did the interaction process begin, who started the viewer/sign-maker exchange, how was the brochure obtained?

As previous year.

v) Colour Classifications

Fully saturated red with a higher saturation score than previous year.

- vi) The Visual Lexis and Paradigmatic Choices, continue into following pages and consider within a total brochure matrix.

The choice of a small Rover and a female driver suggests the larger models with their assumption of up-market associations has now been replaced leaving the Royal 'By Appointment' insignias to perform that function.

III Interest

- vii) Consider Viewing Perspective, Locative Circumstances and Criterial Factors

Viewing perspective moved away from the direct demand angle used in previous year.

- viii) Identify Codes and Social Meanings

The driver has no overt social signals, although the smart appearance would suggest ABC1. No other codes.

- ix) Historicity and Orders of Discourse

The historical associations of the MG model removed with logo now in third place at bottom.

IV Desire/Action

- x) Salience of Participants, their Codes and what are First and Second Orders of Meaning?

Salient factors are the complete change from the aggressive style of the previous year to a driving for pleasure (see smile on face of driver) in a small, therefore, cheaper product. The Royal insignia says the viewer must assume this is the high level acceptability of the Group even if it produces cars that anyone can afford.

- xi) Caption/Text Relationship, list Criterial Words and Compare

Same as previous.

- xii) What is the Visual Cohesion, Compositional Factors and Ellipsis?

Whereas the 1995 edition suggested an aggressive almost macho company interested only in sales to high income targets, the 1996 edition offers a different social semiotic.

The upmarket positioning is still maintained by the addition of the royal insignia but the central dominating photograph has been replaced by a balanced page design with 'a bottom of the range' (in price terms) model Rover 200, now driven by a smiling female on a soft country road. This appeal to a C1 and C2

socio-economic group on the one hand and to a female viewer on the other is countered by the back cover where the black, top-of-the-range Rover 800 model is set against a large country house.

Application of Short Checklist

The next stage is to apply the blank checklist (Figure 12) shown earlier. This offers a technique which allows the analyst to identify quickly any variation from the data collected by means of the previous templates. The analyst can thus select changes which affect the way the corporate positioning ingredients are projected or in need of further examination and apply any one of the short, medium or long form constructs to deliver the relevant detail if it is required. The completed form (figure 13) is based upon a comparative analysis of the 1996 edition. It is important when making comparisons within the context of possible changes in company policies or indeed, changes in the policies of competitor organisations, to analyse a number of artefacts over a period. In the case of this research, where the aims are primarily to test the methodology, no further data will be collected by repeating the procedures on other editions as additional information is unlikely to further develop the methodology.

However, in the case of the later 1997 edition of the brochure further changes did take place. These are worth noting. They provide further examples of the use of social semiotic theory for

this type of analysis. The changes consist, inter alia, of the addition of more human beings and their artefacts within the visual context of the photographs. This takes the form of a driver talking to a pedestrian, a male driver standing near his car and a reference to leisure by means of a bicycle attached to the top of a saloon which suggests that leisure is more than simply driving down country roads. For reference purposes Figure 14 summarises the variations within the three editions.

On a cursory reading of the 1997 edition, it would have suggested there was an improvement over the 1995 and 1996 editions if only because of the cleaner appearance of the graphic design. However, when analysis informed by social semiotics and CDA, is applied, it identifies meaning transfer changes which would affect the attitude of the viewer in relation to the messages demanded by the directors. The data generated by the templates identified the effects of the signifier/signified relationships and how they may be decoded by viewers. The use of CDA suggested conclusions which may not have been so readily apparent on a first examination. For example, in the application to the 1997 edition two major differences to the 1996 edition were identified, one positive and one negative. The communications analyst might, in such a situation, have concluded that "the changes cancel each other out". This would imply that the 1997 edition, although apparently similar to the 1996 edition, was an improvement on earlier editions, especially that of two years previously. In fact, a regression to the earlier 1995 edition was identified in terms of the effectiveness of the messages required

by the board of directors. It was made clear by the respondents I interviewed that because the objective of the corporate communications programme was to reach a range of different stakeholders such as customers, financial analysts, politicians, employees and the business infrastructure, *it was important that each positioning ingredient had equal prominence*. Different stakeholder targets would be affected by different elements and all were of equal importance corporately (see my earlier chapter on the role of positioning) even if that would not have been the case if the brochures were intended for marketing purposes. Despite this it will be seen from the analysis that the requirement for equal prominence i.e. each to have approximately 20% of the total prominence, was not met. In fact the 1995 edition showed:

Britishness at 21 mentions or 40% of total number of signified meanings as discussed during the template applications in earlier chapters and are relevant to the positioning requirements.

Company Heritage at 15 mentions or 29% of total.

International Outlook at 1 mention or 1.9% of total

Intellectual High Ground at 5 mentions or 10.4% of total

Management Quality at 10 mentions or 20% of total

(NB The above totals 101.3. This is due to rounding up

percentage factors when results went to extra decimal points)

There are similar imbalances between the prominence of the positioning ingredients in the 1996 and 1997 editions of the brochure. Allowing even for arbitrary decisions as to the exact visual classification of the above ingredients these figures reinforce the argument that a lacuna exists between boardroom requirements and their practical expression in corporate artefacts.

Having completed the core research it is now possible to assess the results and consider the general benefits and conclusions to be drawn from the application of social semiotic theory and critical discourse analysis in this area of commercial communications. It is also possible to consider where more general advantages can be gained which may have application in similar situations where deeper analysis is needed of visual elements within corporate artefacts. My assessment is discussed in the two final chapters. First, in Chapter IX, is the extent to which there has been a disjuncture between the requirements of the board of the Rover Group and their visual articulation in the set of corporate artefacts examined. In the final chapter, X , the substantive findings are drawn together and consolidated, where possible general conclusions applicable to other similar situations have been drawn.

CHAPTER IX

THE EXTENT TO WHICH POSITIONING REQUIREMENTS HAVE BEEN MET BY SIGNMAKER(S)

In this chapter the data collected through the test applications is compared with the positioning requirements stated to me by the Rover Group board of directors. Before doing this we should remind ourselves of the requirements assembled as a result of the responses I obtained under interview. The respondents considered that the following descriptors should be included wholly or in part within the company's communications activities. As brochures would play a significant role as the conduit for that plan the texts entitled Facts & Figures could fairly be expected to contain messages that suggested the following characteristics in equal balance:

- a) Britishness: This to include *inter alia*, the British motor heritage, integrity, exploring spirit, against all odds, humour, quirkiness and flair.
- b) International Outlook
- c) The Development and Achievement of Holistic Management skills with the creation of a culture that involves People, Responsiveness, Quality and emphasis on Processes
- d) Products that embody the Company Heritage
- e) Ascension of the Intellectual High Ground

It is common practice before signing off the draft brochure for the head of department, in this case the board director, Bernard Carey, to consider the

written text in the light of company strategy. Practising communications managers trained, as many are, in journalistic skills spend a significant time honing the written texts prepared by their subordinates. A comparison is needed therefore between the text and the positioning requirements. Although I did not consider the written text as such I was concerned with the text/caption/visual relationship. It is appropriate therefore, to assemble a list of words or phrases used in the written text and compare them to the positioning ingredients listed above. I ascertained the extent to which the writer of the text expressed the positioning ingredients required by the board. A comparative list of words and phrases which appeared linguistically in the brochure copy, grouped under the ingredient headings, is shown below.

BROCHURE TEXT ITEMS

- a) Britishness. This can include inter alia: the British motor heritage, integrity, exploring spirit, against all odds, humour, quirkiness and flair.

Text words/phrases:

- i) A car with classic provenance (referring to MGF).
- ii) Memories.
- iii) Motor sport success (referring to MGF).
- iv) Specialist vehicle.
- v) Public utility (in sense of 'public spirit', a phrase used by respondents).

b) International Outlook

Text words/phrases:

- i) Global.
- ii) World-wide use.
- iii) 100 countries world-wide (referring to distributor network).
- iv) International joint projects.
- v) Transfer programmes throughout the world (reference to engineering alliances).
- vi) Distributors ... world-wide.
- vii) World class generation of Rovers.

c) Development and Achievement of Holistic Management skills with the creation of a culture that involves People, Responsiveness, Quality and emphasis on Processes.

- i) Technological partnerships.
- ii) Joint ventures.
- iii) Environmental awareness.
- iv) Clean engine emissions.
- v) Elimination of production waste.

d) Products that embody the Company Heritage.

- i) Design (twice mentioned).
- ii) Refinement (twice mentioned also in relation to E).
- iii) Distinctive style (twice mentioned).
- iv) Luxurious.
- v) Flagship.
- vi) Elegant.
- vii) Exceptional ride.
- viii) Handling qualities (can also ref. A).
- ix) Stylish (twice).
- x) Striking.
- xi) Outstanding refinement.

e) Ascension of the Intellectual High Ground.

- i) New motoring concept.
- ii) Improvement.
- iii) "Heart of car is engine".
- iv) Innovative.
- v) Engine refinement (as an engineering concept).

Combinations:

Performance (appeared twice): a) and d).

Executive qualities (ditto): a) and d).

Upmarket (ditto): a) and d).

It should be noted that a positioning statement does not require the exact use of its words in corporate material, only an approximation (Heller, *The Complete Guide to Modern Management* 1991, pp 47-52). The concern is to project an idea, an abstract concept that has anthropomorphic connotations. Commercial managers have difficulty expressing abstract concepts with precision. Even if they do have a high level of literacy they realise the projection of a corporate image is concerned with the potential for decoding by the target public of an abstract concept which can and often is ego directed in terms of appeal to the target reader (Jenkins 1991). This is achieved in advertising through metaphoric and metonymic associations but less so in the case of corporate artefacts where the emphasis is upon specialist stakeholders and less on the end buyer of the product. Corporate positioning is frequently about drawing together elements of *approximate* meaning.

I turn now to the first order of meaning presented by the Rover brochure through its visual, as opposed to written, content. The objective is to ascertain the significance of the overall content in relation to the company's required positioning. Unlike a magazine (Kress & van Leeuwen, pp 218-219) where there can be a highly varied reading pattern, what has been referred to as readers "wandering, cruising or drifting across a magazine rather than reading it, word for word, image by image" (Willis 1990, p.55), the stiff card covers of the Rover brochure make it difficult for an

atypical pattern of reading to emerge. There may be a first 'reading' of the front, back or both covers before opening the brochure but once the attention of the viewer has been gained the pattern is likely to be the inside cover, then consecutive pages. The front cover clearly shows the brochure to be about the Rover Group regardless of the subordinated position of the title 'Facts and Figures 1995', subsumed to the bottom right hand corner.

The dominating signifier (the red MG) by implication transfers its signified surging power to the Rover Group as a cluster of companies. In doing this it sets the scene of the brochure by suggesting the Rover Group is itself young, aggressive, and bounding towards the viewer "hoping to be welcomed". The simile suggests, however, it could be welcomed only if the viewer too is young (either sex). Conversely the viewer could be cowered if older, more staid or unable to afford or want that lifestyle. An older male within the automotive discourse might, however, accept the MG marque as part of automotive history referring back to pre-war marque successes since the MG launch in 1923. It can be seen here that the sign-maker is defining the reader. The result is a large section of the population by socio-economic group, by age, by lifestyle determinants and in the case of older women, by sex, are eliminated from a dialogue the Group wishes to open. It is noticeable that later editions of the brochure do not make this mistake, as I shall discuss. The back cover suggests a more relaxed approach to driving and as a result maintains an

appeal to the older driver of either sex. The move therefore, from attention to interest may not take place if the historic connotation to 1923 when the first MG was launched, fails to resonate with an older viewer. Such a reader will be excluded too if the back cover is not seen because the brochure is placed in the showroom face upwards. A further query is created by the brochure. Is the MG marque a part of the Rover Group at all? The absence of the MG logo from the other two logos at the head of the page might suggest it is not. This omission weakens the Group's positioning as a manufacturer of different types of vehicle which is one of the positioning ingredients. The attempt to transcend young and old viewers through the contrast between front and back cover is almost too obvious and could alienate both age groups. The double signifier may not be seen at all because it depends how the brochure is displayed in a POS (point of sale) holder. If attention has been held and the cover turned, the inside front cover attempts to consolidate the dichotomy created by the front and back cover by using a Rover saloon to attract the more established non-adventurous viewer. The car however, is driven in a sufficiently aggressive style with wheels on full lock, lights on and contrasting black background, to arouse the interest of the younger driver. The aggressive, dynamic, attraction of the male driver to that particular target audience is enhanced by the use of sunglasses.

The captions for the front and inside cover are short, difficult to

find and modestly designed. They give the minimum of information even for those who take trouble to find and read the text. The inside cover's vectoring carries the eye to page one where a block of text in italic is strongly framed by the thick black bars at the top and bottom of the page. The text describes the Group in corporate terms making it clear this is a corporate and not a marketing brochure by virtue of the inclusion of matter relating to the whole Group and not to individual marques and brands. The attention has been held by early visual statements but the target audience is severely reduced. Interest may have been aroused by the information now presented in written format on the Group. The next two pages (pages 2 & 3) reaffirm the existence of the Rover saloon range and use red (as with the cover) to hold attention. The socio-cultural signifiers, although placed in a subordinate position i.e. as background, have the effect of adding signified meanings to the foregrounded vehicles by association. One visual shows a country house setting, another a well manicured bush of the type frequently seen in photographs of country estates and the other shows photographs positioned in soft countryside settings.

By suggesting this is where the Rover saloon is most at home the sign-maker is *defining* the audience and conceivably reducing further the size of its viewer universe. It is apparently not enough to be young, male and aggressive. The viewer should also be the scion of an establishment family and living in the country. The

subjectivity of the cover visual with its call for viewer identification, the fiercely driven saloon possibly about to stop and pick up the viewer and the leisure-oriented back cover against a picturesque backcloth, all suggest that the viewer could step into the car. The captions talk technical but the visuals are superordinate signifiers on pages two and three, as the element of subjectivity has been replaced by objectivity. Only one of the cars appears to be moving. As this is the last to be viewed on the page, i.e. bottom right side of page, it maintains some quasi-subjective interest and creates a desire to turn the page. On pages 4 and 5 the sign-maker is now broadening the definitions of the reader. A female appears in one of the two attention-getting red cars on the left page but she appears too to be a member of the ABC1 socio-economic group. The visual beneath continues the young male viewer definition by using a rally liveried Mini with rally stripes, yet positioned within sight of a Georgian style of house. Thus the anchoring of many of the pictures creates a continuity of narrative that lacks the subtlety required by the boards positioning requirements. The two photographs of MGs on these pages, now in rugged country, maintain the young adventurous spirit theme which has become one of the narratives.

The following pages, 6 and 7, concentrate on the Land Rover in various guises. Yet again three of them are in country house settings, one in converted format as a van with closed sides in a wood (i.e. semi professional usage) and the final visual shows

what appears to be firemen using their Land Rover which has been converted as a fire fighting vehicle. There is a danger that by allowing the majority of visuals of the Land Rover to show the marque as a domesticated vehicle it becomes less acceptable by professionals who want it for rough usage. There is no clear vectoring except the left to right positioning for the domestic country house models where there is an implied invitation to enter the two professional vehicles. One of them however, is so surrounded by a guard of firemen that the non-professional viewer is clearly excluded. Pages 8 and 9 again use red for the vehicle colours but the sign-maker loses the interest-creating factor by driving away from the viewer on the right page. They also appear to have discarded the reason why they have, according to the caption, won awards. One as 'A Best Family Diesel', here seen driving away into the country with no visible humans on board. The other is the winner of an 'Off-Roader of the Year Award' yet it is placed within the manicured grounds of a large country house or institution. There are no other visuals on the page. Pages 10 and 11 refer to the important positioning requirement that the company should be seen as having an international orientation. This is achieved with a two-page soft focus map of the world containing visuals that show three Land Rovers and three saloons in different types of apparently international settings.

The following two pages are headed 'World-wide Operations' but

the visuals fail to suggest the subjects of the pictures which themselves carry few marks of identification. The vehicles have been moved into a subordinate position with the exception of one picture where the vehicles appear to be moving off the production line. Three left side visuals show motor vehicle distributors, although one has only a single car in the forecourt, while the third photograph shows an unidentified building. On the right page a training seminar places the viewer in the audience and vectors towards the teacher who we must assume is from Rover and therefore carries their authority. This theme is continued down the page with no vectoring to the final picture of a technician checking a car and drawing the viewer in to make the test with the official from Rover.

Pages 14 and 15 fail to connect the visuals with the texts. The headings as a group lack narrative cohesion or continuity of subject. The first says 'Engine Technology and the Environment', the second 'Rover Performance Statistics', the third, 'The Rover Group and the UK Economy' and the last, bottom right page, 'Rover Group Locations'. The three visuals are all concerned with production or close-up photographs of the engine. One photograph shows the use of robotics signifying a modern approach to manufacturing (see positioning statement). There is a colour consistency of blue and red which maintains some cohesion. The final page (16) and the back cover continue the manufacturing theme on the left side of page where two

photographs show the use of robotics. The viewer is thus positioned through perspective as a viewer who looks on, possibly as a distributor or potential purchaser. The right side picture is of 'The new Range Rover' waiting left to right, inviting the viewer to enter. The effect of these two pages is to suggest the viewer has visited the factory and is now ready to leave and enter a new Range Rover.

If items of visual meaning are correlated with the requirements of the positioning statement it becomes apparent there is a lower numerical level of correlation in some areas than between written text and positioning requirement, but higher in others.

- a) **BRITISHNESS** (including motoring heritage, integrity, exploring spirit, against all odds, humour, quirkiness and flair)

NB: The figures in brackets denote the number of times the positioning ingredient occurs in the brochure.

- i) Emphasis on MG (3)
- ii) Rugged country and mountain settings (9)
- iii) Aggressive driving style (inside cover)
- iv) Mini in Georgian setting
- v) Country house settings (7)

Visual mentions total: 21

Written mentions in text: 5

NB: It could be queried whether the country house settings project Britishness to all global audiences.

b) INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK

- i) World map double page
- ii) Vehicles in centre road. This signifier countered by signifier that shows all cars where steering is visible as right-hand drive.

Visual total: 1

Written text: 7

c) HOLISTIC MANAGEMENT SKILLS, CULTURE THAT INVOLVES PEOPLE, RESPONSIVENESS, QUALITY AND EMPHASIS ON PROCESS

- i) Land Rover adaptations (2)
- ii) Manufacturing Process (7)
- iii) Training seminar

Visual total: 10

Written text: 5

d) PRODUCTS THAT EMBODY THE COMPANY'S HERITAGE

It will be seen from the field research this is an ambivalent heading. Directors tended to mean by company heritage either the ownership by the Group of many British marques or the presence in their current marque range of comfortable saloon cars with a predominance of leather and wood. For these reasons I have included numerically under this heading all photographs of saloon models, although the interrelationship with the country house British heritage is a factor to be noted. The latter could be equated with company heritage, i.e. 'The Doctor's car', as it has been described (Mowat-Brown 1992, p.19).

- i) Shots of saloon cars (15)

Visual mentions total: 15

Written mentions in text: 11

e) ASCENSION OF THE INTELLECTUAL HIGH GROUND

- i) Training seminar (1)
- ii) Use of robotics and hi tech. (4)

Visual mentions total: 5

Written mentions in text: 5

It should be noted in the description of responses by board members, that if the company was to establish its own identity then Britishness should be an important criterion for differentiation from similar models and marques manufactured by BMW (note earlier comments by the then CEO of BMW where he reinforces this element of differentiation). The correlation of visual scoring to written statements under the above headings was 52 direct visual projections against only 33 mentions in the written text. This apparent effectiveness of the visual signifiers belies a number of underlying arbitrary meanings. For example, the visual definition of Britishness includes all visuals with a country house or Georgian setting (total 8) which in other European countries the viewer may have identified with their own country. It could be argued that in such a case the architectural style would be different although the settings tended to be similar to ones frequently used in British tourist literature. This highlights the earlier point when discussing the Toyota example that when the question "what are the assumptions being made on the page from the viewers point of view", or put another way "what assumptions must be in place to account for this or that interpretation" that the viewer is expected to be British or at least someone who thinks like the British and associates these settings with the English establishment-class lifestyle. However, in interviews with board level directors I noted that all respondents wished to see the company in corporate terms (as opposed to 'product values') projected as truly international and not a British, or indeed Birmingham, based company that

happened to export globally. With this in mind it is strange there is only one syntagm (admittedly a double page) which suggests clearly an international context, whereas there are seven such mentions in the written text.

A straightforward number count, the 52:33 figure above, does not reflect a correlation between requirement and results. On this first order of meaning there was, therefore, a significant divergence in relation to the meaning required by the board of directors. There was one double page, for example, to suggest the company was international whereas the written text carried seven mentions. For the dimension concerned with management there were ten visual examples where the meaning reflected positively on the management culture of the group and only five written such references. In regard to the desire to be seen as intellectually ahead of the competition there was an equal balance of five examples written and shown visually. We should note that there were three further examples where certain words could be said to fit both the Britishness and the company heritage category. It becomes apparent if we take account of the definitions articulated by senior managers that differences exist in the ability of the sign-maker to express certain subjects through visual means. Although it was necessary for me to make some arbitrary choices, as would be the case for a communications analyst, there does appear to be a lack of control over the balance of meaning transfers between written text and visual signification.

The Need for a Format to Tabulate the Data

To date three templates have been applied together with a cross checking process utilising selected aspects of CDA based upon the work of Barker and Galasinski (2001). In each application the constraints suggested by Tack (1993, p.33) regarding the short time frame within which the manager operates, have informed the process. To draw together data from one brochure, a format has been devised which collates the material for ease of reference. Such a table in blank form was shown as Figure 9. In its completed form (Figure 10) it is an assemblage of data from the analysis. The positioning ingredients are included to enable comparative assessments to be made. As an overall summary of the changes in three brochure, Figure 14 helps to identify the changes in matrix form.

CHAPTER X

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this research has been to examine the extent to which social semiotic theory and critical discourse analysis has a role to play in the analysis of visual, non-linguistic, corporate commercial literature such as brochures. The theories were pilot tested on a single photograph within a Toyota Annual Report and then in a more considered process using specially developed templates on three corporate brochures published by the automotive manufacturers the Rover Group. Findings were obtained from the pilot application to the Toyota photograph that later informed the development of the methodology applied to the Rover Group Communication material.

The Toyota pilot study, however, confirmed that additional data can be obtained by the application of templates based upon social semiotic theory within a commercial context. Currently, the processes used by commercial practitioners in this type of analysis concentrate on the written text, considering the visual elements as support or illustration for a meaning that could not be adequately explained in words. The approach developed here appeared to offer at the pilot stage a technique for reading the visuals in terms of a separate syntagm which may transfer extra meaning or even an alternative one within the pictures' own context. When the analysis was applied to the Rover Group material the analytical process moved to a more significant stage because it had the additional objective which was to compare the requirements of the company board in terms of specific meanings with the extent to which those meanings

were accurately transposed into a visual format. I was concerned, in fact, to ascertain what ingredients the board of the Rover Group wished to see as their corporate positioning message and then gauge the extent to which that message was reflected in the visual components of the brochures under review. In the case of Toyota no account was taken of the requirements of senior management in terms of meaning transfer for reasons already explained, i.e. it was important to test without prior knowledge of the signmakers intentions, the methodology *per se*. During the analysis of the Rover Group brochures, however, I noted again a factor I had experienced in other corporate studies. That was the fact that large corporations seldom have clearly defined corporate messages they wish to project, with each element agreed with their Board of Directors. In fact the directors often differ according to the needs of different departmental requirements, the personal views of individuals and the varying efficacy of discrete elements within their communications plan. In order to draw together these varied factors all the members of the board, including the chief executive and the director of corporate communications, were interviewed by me against the same topic menu. The summarised results were 'signed off' as accurate by the CEO and director of corporate communications.

My task was to summarise twenty-five sets of board level interview results, plus supplementary group discussions at shop floor level and the inputs gained from my attendance at internal seminar discussions, into a format suitable for comparison with the wide variety of meanings represented visually in the brochures. I did not expect an exact fit between the board's positioning requirements and the visual meaning elements in their brochures, but as the brochures formed the central conduit for the transfer of that meaning it would

be expected that the corporate brochures' visual messages would be 'on strategy' if they were to meet the objectives of their publication.

The corporate positioning ingredients were summarised as:

- Britishness
- International Outlook
- Holistic Management Skills
- Products embodying their motoring heritage
- Ascension of Intellectual High Ground.

Each of these headings, however, involved a number of underlying factors that helped inform them. These factors had to be seen within a wider context whereby respondents would merge answers to different questions. This created composite descriptors for words such as Britishness. In that case a number of internal studies had already been carried out by the company into what Britishness meant to a wider public. Words such as 'radical', 'against all odds', 'humorous', 'integrity', 'honest', 'breeding' and 'exploring spirit' were used in answer to my questions concerning the meaning of Britishness in the Rover company terms. When such concepts were brought into these discussions with senior managers they were often used in conjunction with comments on the British motor heritage regarding items such as racing and land speed record successes by marques now owned by the Group. Such comments included descriptions of British sports car leadership and the need, for historical reasons (see Appendix Exhibit B) for customers for the saloon car marques to be drawn from the professional ABC1 classes as they had been in the past.

The phrase 'people oriented' was often used by respondents as a descriptor of the company culture. When questioned this included words such as 'friendly', 'forward thinking', 'learning culture', 'customer orientation'. It became necessary to merge these people related factors under the one heading that I termed 'the development and achievement of holistic management skills'. In doing so, however, it was important when comparing this composite requirement with the semiotic meaning potentials in the visual design of the brochures not to lose sight of what the overall heading contained. Despite these factors it was an unexpected finding, as stated earlier, that many of the photographs failed to show a human presence and even when the caption or surrounding text suggested 'people' they were not included in the photograph.

The abstract ascension of the intellectual high ground' was a difficult concept to portray, yet was visualised effectively in the form of robotic manufacturing processes and photographs of seminar situations. One core need (according to the chief executive in interview) was to show the company in an international context and to make it clear through the communications activity of the group that Rover was not, in the words of the chief executive, "a Birmingham based metal basher". This was a fundamental requirement, yet it was emphasised visually in an almost casual manner with two pages containing photographs of automotive models within different contexts, not all of which could be considered 'international'. In fact the presence of only right hand drive vehicles in every other photograph within the brochure countered this explicit board requirement.

ROVER GROUP – FACTS & FIGURES

SUMMARY OF VISUAL CHANGES BETWEEN 1995 – 1997

<u>1995</u>	<u>1996</u>	<u>1977</u>
COVER MGF male leisure macho speed. ICON signifies more them itself.	Rover 400 Saloon Female Leisure or work Socio-economic ABC ₁	Same
No MG logo with Land-Rover and Rover marque.	Addition of MG logo	All logos absent.
Large picture. Bold type face at F&F 1995 at bottom right corner.	Reduced picture size. Lighter more friendly type-face for F&F, now above visual.	
Page One: Bold bars in black, logos head page plus addresses, telephone numbers, etc.	Bars absent, Rover Group in large type-face. All logo's at bottom of page, addresses etc. to bottom of page.	Same. All logo's absent
Page two: Headed with Rover Marque. One visual shows white Rover 800.	No Rover marque heading Rover 800 black Rover marque dropped to bottom of page. Some linguistic changes.	No Rover Marque header. Rover 800 black. No Rover Marque on page.
Page three: Black bars.	No black bars. Rover 400 pointing away from views in country wild setting.	No black bars. Rover 400 reversed but pointing away in country house setting. Black Rover 400 on mountain with bicycle strapped to room. Rover 600, now white and set in traditional street.
Red Rover 400 Tourer in country road. Black Rover 600 Country road.	Red Rover 400 Tourer in country Road. Black Rover 600 country road.	
Page four: Black bars. Black Rover 200 wooded road.	No black bars. Red Rover 200 country Road	Same.
Red Rover 100, driver fast, open road or trade.	Same.	Same.
Red mini with Rally bars on bonnet.	Black mini, white rally bars. Professional suited middle-aged owner, suburban house.	Red mini. Rally bars on bonnet, young driver. Fast cornering.

Page five:

MGF hard top black Mountain Rover Coupe, grey exotic Same
setting with snow. mountain setting.

MG RV8 hill road, stationary Black Rover Cabriolet country Black open Rover Cabriolet,
on corner. road. young driver admiring from
road. Mountain setting.

Black Rover 200 coupe. Red MGF on hill road. Red MGF same.
Wooded road. Rover & MG logo's on page. No logo's.

Page six:

Land-Rover logo as heading. Land Rover in Rover type-face Same.
Black bars. as heading.

Headed 'product range'.
Black bars.

Red Range Rover in country Black range rover and interior Black Range Rover set before
house setting. shot. stately home.
Set in upper middle-class farm
conversion

Class off white Range Rover set Logo Land Rover bottom of White Freelander, stationary
in stone walled country road. page. with young driver taking to girl
on bicycle.
No Land-Rover logo.

Page seven:

White Discovery on private road Black Discovery on wild country Road Discovery in front of
in country. road. stately home.
White closed conversion Black Defender, conversion Red Defender in front of
defender set on wild country climbing rough country hill. middle-class house.
mountain fuel. Same. Same.
Grey special vehicle conversion
with ladder, and hard-hat team
of three men.

Page eight and nine:

(middle page spread)

List of company and product Rover Group's Worldwide Same but one photograph
awards with two photographs Operation. changes the model.
of Rover 600 Diesel (1995 List of all distributors counties
Best Family Diesel) and with world map and six
Range Rover (1995 Off model/marque shots and no
Roader of the year). caption.

Page twelve and thirteen:

As pages ten and eleven for 1996 and 1997 editions but with heading reversed out in black bar.	Company and product Awards as 1995 edition pages eight and nine.	Same except visuals now of Rover 600 Diesel (1995) Best Big family Diesel) but in light blue in front of country house with lawn and daffodils. The Range Rover is now blue and in front of country house.
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Pages fourteen and fifteen:

Same but headings reversed out in black.	Same (without black bars).	Same.
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Page sixteen and inside back cover:

Same.	Same plus extra visual of new design centre.
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Back cover:

Off-white Rover 600 parked on hilly road overlooking sea, pointing left to right down the hill. Viewer to identify with driver.	Black Rover 800 parked in front of Palladian style county house. Driver in dark glasses.	White Rover 600 stationary in front of traditional University type buildings. Male driver, no dark glasses.
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The methodical application of templates as described has identified the disjuncture which appears to occur in this test situation between boardroom thinking and that of the sign-maker. By doing this managers will be able to respond with greater accuracy to the results of their analytical process. For example, the questions under the Attention heading clearly identify the participants and the causal relationships between them which in the case of the Rover brochures showed a significant proportion of vehicles positioned within a cultural setting that would reject discrete cohorts within their corporate target audience. Questions under the same Attention heading concerning linear narrative and vectoring make clear, *inter alia*, the polysemic transfer of meanings on some pages; in one case there are photographs which represent subjects as varied as engine technology, Group financial results, the effect of the company on the UK economy, the location of company factories and the environmental awareness of the engineering technology. As a result they distract from a coherent narrative which needs to relate to the company positioning requirements if there is to be a unisemic decoding of meaning by the viewer.

Viewing perspectives and locative circumstances that lead the transfer of meaning towards the clearer establishment of the criterial factors that underpin the positioning ingredients have their own bias. As such they establish their own socio-cultural *a priori* position. Such factors are reinforced by the responses to questions concerned with codes and social meaning. The relationship between the viewer as participant and those participants which are portrayed in the photographs will often vary. The effect of this, is a separation of the demands for action of the picture compared with those of the brochure as a

whole. Such ambiguity can be reinforced by the caption/photograph relationships which in the cases discussed earlier can offer unrelated syntagms, i.e. between caption and photograph. If the meanings within a caption and a picture are to be unrelated, the question has to be asked why are they offered as a single unit of signification?

Some mention has been made of alternative signifiers but CDA can be used to examine those paradigm points where choices had to be made within the genre. Below are some of the choices the sign-maker could have made. Many have already been discussed.

- a) Any one of the Rover saloon models which has a less specific signification in terms of socio-economic and lifestyle associations could have been used. This would have broadened the target cohort viewer response.
- b) The positioning of the vehicle in one situation could have been altered to reduce aggression.
- c) The inclusion of the MG logo in line with the other marques at the top of the page (1995 Edition) would clarify the MG relationship with the Group.
- d) The title of the brochure if realigned with the name of the Group would emphasise the subject of the brochure in objective terms more appropriate for a corporate use brochure.

- e) The background could be drawn from different types of countryside or from urban situations that would relate to the target viewer.

If we review some of the underlying trends identified as a result of the application of semiotic theory and critical discourse analysis clear variation becomes immediately apparent. Because such variations are of such a general nature as to be extant for similar corporate situations, I will highlight them here. To do this I refer to points discussed already in Chapter IV on corporate positioning. For a company to project a clear and memorable positioning to its publics it should not only include the agreed positioning elements but where possible avoid unnecessary participants, what Kress and van Leeuwen term 'circumstances' (see Chapter VI), that create ambiguity. From the foregoing analysis it is apparent that such rules are frequently broken. The inclusion of circumstances is not the sole problem within the context of ensuring the AIDA model helps achieve corporate objectives. The inclusion of conflicting messages, elements which do not offer a clear meaning transfer and variations in the inter-textual relationship between sign-maker and viewer, can conspire to undermine effectiveness in a visual text. Such situations have been discussed earlier in terms of over emphasis on a single socio-cultural lifestyle, the mixed venues for the Land Rover model and situation shots (the photograph of the distributor building, for example) which fail to reinforce the core positioning messages.

Another general factor has been the inability to treat clearly the concept of the syntagm, i.e. the unit of meaning, in multivariant forms. For example, the royal

insignia on the top of the front cover of the 1996 and 1997 versions of the brochure are syntagms with their own signification. When they are viewed within the context of the whole cover there is a new signification partly containing the original meaning but now working intercontextually with participants such as the car as signifier and the context of the Rover Group as a syntagm in its own right. At one point I discuss the syntagmatic effect of the double page spread working as one syntagm similar to one page. However, the total brochure, in the strategic terms of corporate policy, also works as a whole, as a syntagm which attaches meaning to the Rover Group just as does the front cover. There appears to be a failure by the publishers of the brochures to appreciate such factors.

If the brochure is viewed as one syntagm 'fed' by a diachronic series of syntagms each of which are themselves fed by those on individual pages, then the need for a clear narrative sequence is obvious. Yet, from the analytic comments so far discussed there are many disjunctures throughout the brochure. Sometimes it is the sign-maker/viewer relationship, in others it is the conflicting vectors and eyelines. Sometimes it is the failure to relate pictures to captions or in the case of the Toyota photograph there is no caption at all. A sequence of disjunctures in the publisher's thinking has therefore become apparent. They start with the failure to view the brochure as a whole, continue with a lack of narrative cohesion and finally show themselves to be composed of many smaller factors which point up the paradigmatic choices made by those in the production team.

In the previous chapter (IX) the positioning elements were compared with the

number of times they were portrayed. This showed how, despite the hopes of the board of directors for a balanced portrayal, once the number of relevant semiotic signifiers was calculated, it could be seen there was a lack of balance between the number of times each item signifying a positioning ingredient appeared. This means stakeholders were treated unequally and despite the wish of the board to use the brochure (because it was published for corporate, as opposed to marketing, purposes) for distribution to a wide selection of target cohorts it would be less effective in specific situations than in others. The templates showed, for example, that whereas the brochure would be effective in terms of meeting the positioning strategy if distributed to high net worth customers by distributors, it would be less likely to transfer the required meaning to international audiences, lower-income customers and indeed those elements of the global business infrastructure who responded positively to companies seen to be capable of grasping the intellectual high ground.

My intention in this chapter is to avoid restating the detail of the data collected in the research, much of the discussion on which takes place in the previous chapter (IX). My intention here is to draw general and specific conclusions from the data emphasising areas which show a disjointure between need and effect in regard to corporate visual realisation.

It is of almost equal importance, however, to draw attention to data which does not have a relevance to the corporate requirements of the board of Rover in positioning terms. Just as there may be failures to transfer strategic meaning requirements demanded by the corporate communications function, so it is important to note situations where 'off-strategy' messages are being projected.

If social semiotic analysis can identify such hidden elements then it can play an additional role in the process of reducing misunderstandings of the type which can occur in corporate activity. I noted certain extra meaning transfers of the type that were identified through second orders of meaning analysis which may have been unnoticed by the production team, or not seen as significant. On the other hand a decision might have been taken to include items for reasons of which I am not aware. Such off-strategy items were:

- i) A continuing thematic consequence of large country houses as a backcloth regardless of the type of car that was fore-grounded. This carries strong customer/target audience identification and possibly socio-cultural constraints as a result. The only model not set in such signifying situations, apart from those in neutral countryside settings, was the Mini which still maintained an ABC1 socio-economic signification by being positioned within sight of a row of Georgian-style high-value buildings.
- ii) There is an absence of urban scenes, yet it must be assumed the cars portrayed will be travelling for a significant period of their life within an urban environment.
- iii) The only portrayal of a human that projected a clear signifier/signified relationship was a male driver in sunglasses seen to be driving hard and fast. This sets a tone of confrontation rather than relaxed leisure driving.
- iv) The attraction stage of the brochure aims directly at the young upwardly-

mobile male (and possibly female executive) target cohort with an aggressive stance which although intended to add by association a dynamic to the whole Group must have the effect of rejecting a large segment of the wider target audience.

- v) The appeal of 25 of the 40 pictures is aimed exclusively at a middle-class high income audience despite the fact the company offers in its range models of low cost and vehicles for conversion into quasi industrial use, i.e. fire fighting, breakdown towing, police, and tough expedition work.
- vi) There is a failure on some pages to use vectoring either to attract the viewer into the car and identify with the driver or to carry the eye of the viewer forward and thus maintain a continuity of narrative.
- vii) Towards the end of the brochure, (the penultimate pages) at the point when desire and action should be paramount there is an unnecessarily polysemic approach to the subjects under consideration. On pages 14 and 15 of all three brochures the following unconnected subjects are discussed in written terms on a single layout of two facing pages:

- Engine Technology and the Environment
- Rover Group Performance Statistics
- Rover Group and the UK Economy
- Rover Group Locations

Only the first of these is supported visually in that there are two

photographs of an engine which carry a technical caption whereas an assumption has to be made that the photograph refers to the items under consideration. The last heading carries visual support with the picture of a robotics production line captioned in terms of location.

My templates, whether in the short form or aided by the long form for the front and back covers, appear to provide a methodology by which an analysis can focus on visual details which make up the whole. There are some distortions in the transference of meaning such as where there are pictures that maintain a non-countryside positioning. This is positive in terms of global use for the brochure because, by placing moving vehicles in such a way, i.e. in the middle of the road, it is impossible to assign a country to the landscape or setting. The device is abrogated, however, in terms of meaning transfer by the fact that every vehicle is right hand drive and therefore probably on a British road. There are few significant markets in the world (except Australia and New Zealand) where motor vehicles drive on the left of the road. Such a positioning mitigates against the wishes of the senior managers of Rover to project a company essentially international 'in outlook'. This last phrase means more, in the sense of a reference to fundamental cultural attitudes than does a simple positioning message that the company 'is international' which can imply no more than it sells products to overseas markets. Whereas there are effective visual elements used, as where the final page takes the perspective of the observer when production systems are shown and uses the back cover to connate the sense of 'offering transport' to the visitor, the association is so tenuous I cannot as analyst be sure it was intended.

The relation between the two elements of the brochure which fall within the 'attention' phase of the model, i.e. the front and back covers, takes a confrontational position which should have only been accepted by the head of department if it was known positively how the brochure was to be positioned at point of contact with the viewer. This is, of course impossible, even if a display pocket was used. The range of stakeholder targets is too varied and their delivery systems are uncertain for the publisher to know which of the two covers should be the one placed face upwards.

The short and long form templates appear to be effective in this area when items that are 'off strategy' need to be identified. The templates appear to uncover distortions in meaning unlikely to be found through casual reading by a public affairs director concentrating primarily on the written word. It is reassuring to know there is the long form construct (of the type tested on the Toyota photograph) available if a single item needs further analysis.

What then are the conclusions that can be drawn from the application overall of the methodology employed in this research? I would summarise them as:

a) A failure of understanding by corporate signmakers

Sign-makers fail in their understanding of the mores and attitudes of

many target audiences for whom their literature is intended. They lack an appreciation of the detailed socio-cultural implications of many of their signifiers. The signifier/signified relationship, always an arbitrary one, can fail to resonate with the intended target viewer (*vide* the background settings for many of the photographs of Rover models) or, in some cases the meaning can cause the rejection of potential target viewers because the sign-maker has a poor understanding of the socio-cultural lifestyle of the intended target cohort.

b) The importance of second orders of meaning

Whereas the technical graphic skills are of a professional standard in that they draw the viewer's eye to the criterial ingredients, there is a lack of understanding of second orders of meaning which derive from the signification. This means sign-makers need training in the basic elements of social semiotics.

c) The corporate brochure to be viewed as one syntagm

There is a failure to view corporate brochures as a single strategic syntagm which signifies within a coherent narrative carried forward page upon page. There is thus a disjointure in saliency with the result that some visuals project a different emphasis to those demanded by the corporate positioning requirements.

d) Greater consistency needed in participant interaction

The complex interactivity between different participants on the one hand and the implied or assumed participant (the viewer) on the other, is used inconsistently. This means the level of involvement of the viewer varies from one visual to another. In some cases the visual configuration creates a form of direct address but in others the image rejects the viewer. What Kress and van Leeuwen call (p.122) "the demand" varies throughout the brochures, thus creating ambiguity. An opportunity to involve the viewer within the syntagmatic meaning of the brochure as a single entity is lost.

e) A variable relationship between visuals and captions reduces signification

The relationship between caption and visual is treated with an inconsistency which borders on the casual. In the case of the Toyota photograph, because there was no caption the reader is left to make assumptions regarding location, content and even the subject of the dialogue among the visual signifiers. In the Rover example, in some cases there was a weak connection between the visuals and their caption (the Rover vehicles that gained awards are one example) and in a further category there was low meaning transfer in the case of a picture showing a building with no identification and another picture which showed a building fronting an empty forecourt. These two photographs offered no identification regarding their purpose nor why there was an apparently empty parking space in one of the photographs.

f) The excessive use of single colours can cause redundancy

The use of colour maintained a relatively consistent level of saturation, modulation, contextualisation, brightness and illumination. The excessive use of red as a marker to hold the eye or carry from one visual to another has a redundancy effect that diminishes the impact within the brochures under analysis.

g) Sign-makers to note increasing effect of catechresis by media

The use of metonym is superficial (sunglasses on young driver of Rover). The social semiotic impact appears to be little understood by the sign-maker. The media have created a catachrestic meaning to sunglasses in that they no longer represent sun and fast driving alone but refer by association to models and celebrities posing for publicity photographs.

h) The positioning ingredient imbalance causes a disparity in meaning

There was a clear assumption in the answers to my questions during the field work and the follow-on discussions with directors, that an equal balance in terms of prominence was to be given to the positioning ingredients. Even a simple count of the instances of each ingredient showed wide disparities between their prominence.

Although it can be dangerous to draw conclusions from a limited set of

examples the results do point to certain *general principles*. They are that:

- a) Social semiotic and CDA techniques when applied to corporate brochures can help identify the failure of visual sign-makers to transfer meanings required by management.
- b) Production teams do not fully understand the semiotic implications nor the second orders of meaning and socio-cultural implications of visual (non-linguistic) conduits.
- c) Disjunctures occur because the graphic design and the photography is frequently undertaken by different executives to those who concentrate on the written text. As a result variations occur which range from an absence of visual identification to minor omissions of visual participants that are referred to in captions or surrounding texts.
- d) Interactional demand between viewers and visual texts, and the intercontextuality between the visuals within other sections of the artefact, vary between individual items or syntagms.
- e) Brochures, although considered by managers as serious documents because they are 'corporate' and as such are requested by the viewer for serious informational purposes, may as a result of direct mail distribution suffer from the same handling problems as magazines because the tendency for readers to "cruise", or

“drift across” the pages (Willis 1990, p.55,) means they can be read with a non-linear reading path. Despite this factor they are not viewed as such by the production team who should consider corporate brochures as well as marketing material as a single syntagm and not view them only as a composite of individual items of meaning.

The above analysis offers extra data to that normally obtained by managers signing off a text for publication. It helps the company take the powerful position Witthaus (July 2001) describes when he says “directors must try to see the business from the customer and supplier side” and later in the same article (July 2001) “this means getting to know who your customers are and what they want ... companies with strong brands live according to the values defined by their most profitable customers, and create customer experiences that are designed to be valuable to the people who buy them.” By applying an assessment of the assumptions that need to be in place to make such interpretations then Witthaus’ requirements are more likely to be met if a template of the type I used is applied.

Before concluding the thesis there are some important general points to be made. The templates have been developed specifically for use within the corporate communications context. This has been explained.

However, the basis templates can, with only small changes, be used for checking a wider range of commercial printed material. Such material

might include, for example, the multimodal brochures used by direct mail companies, leaflets and booklets which accompany product sales, commercial sponsorship print material and indeed single advertisement. In the case of the last, work has already been undertaken by Williamson (1978 and reprinted 1994).

Analysis of the modes of communication listed would gain from a methodical approach replicated by managers who thus create their own comparative discourse. There is one outstanding difference to the meaning potential of corporate material over that of sales texts. The corporate message, because of the diverse stakeholder audience is more complex. Corporate positioning by its nature is polysemic (the number of ingredients discussed in the Rover case history is not unusual but the ratio of meanings to stakeholder audiences makes the number of combinations considerable).

In addition to these applications which require little change to the templates there is a need to evolve a process for the commercial moving picture. By this I refer to content analysis of television editorial (news and feature programmes), corporate videos which are given to customers in conjunction with a brochure, and of course the multifarious use of film and video at exhibitions and point of sale.

The subject of non-linear reading patterns has been discussed but the complexity of analysing meaning transfer in such situations takes a quantum forward leap where moving pictures are concerned. The

explosion in the use of television and the Internet means there is an urgent need for systems, possibly based upon the templates I describe, that can assess meaning transfer on the screen.

My research has been limited to the application of one set of disciplines. It is obvious within this process there are areas, some discussed above, where further research is needed. I have argued, for example, that a disjuncture occurs between the messages demanded by the board of directors and their final expression in print. But why does this disjuncture occur?

A need exists for further interviews and diagnosis of the interpersonal communications problems which apparently occur when a member of the board of directors briefs the head of the corporate communications function, who then briefs executives within that department, who in turn instructs graphic designers, photographers, and sometime external publishers. There is an obvious need for psychological research, taking account also of the social semiotic discourse, to isolate those points where misunderstanding, disagreement, post factor justification and just plain clashes in the encoding and decoding process, can occur.

There are other areas within the process where additional research is needed. How for example do the sub-cultures within the main corporate culture distort the decoding of the corporate positioning message. Indeed how was it originally presented 'own the line'?

The work I describe in this thesis is only a beginning. Its implications, in an age where the growing importance of the visual over the written form is considerable practitioners will need to acquire knowledge of the semiotic process as an integral part of their business studies. As I progressed this work I found there were countervailing forces at play as the work of academia was translated into a form suitable for use within the day to day work of the executive.

Academic work demands considerable accuracy with every norm or hypothesis which is accepted justified by rigorous primary research.

Most managers agree with the importance of such rigor. However, as I have suggested (Tack 1993), once the situation changes from one of theoretical discussion, time pressures envelop the process, simplification of the hitherto rigorous research takes place, often unwittingly. I have learnt that patience must be exercised so that ways are found that will ease the application of the methodology without losing accuracy of results.

Even so, I believe that the methodologies I describe do offer a real improvement in the accuracy of the use of visual imagery in corporate communications and as such deserve to be considered as a core body of thinking from which further work can be developed.

ROVER GROUP



FACTS & FIGURES

1995



Front Cover:

The return of the classic MG with 1990s design, performance and refinement in the shape of the MGF, announced in March 1995.

Below:

The new Rover 400 Series, also announced in March, is a new generation medium-sized car range in the distinctive Rover style.

ROVER GROUP

ROVER GROUP



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THE COMPANY IN BRIEF

The Rover Group is Britain's largest motor manufacturer producing approximately half a million vehicles a year. The Group designs, manufactures and markets Rover small, medium and executive cars; MG sports cars and Land Rover specialist four-wheel drive vehicles.

The Company has annual sales of £4,900 million and exports its vehicles to about 100 countries worldwide earning over £2,400 million in overseas sales each year.

Major market areas are Western Europe, Japan, North America and Australia with an increasing presence in Asia, South America, South Africa and the Pacific Rim and a growing number of international joint projects and technology transfer programmes throughout the world.

Rover Group is a major employer with 36,000 people working for the company in the UK and internationally. A further 110,000 people work within companies supplying Rover Group with production material and services and in the 3,300 dealers and specialist distributors selling the company's vehicles worldwide.

Rover Group's products divide into three distinct vehicle ranges. Land Rover is acknowledged as the world leader in four-wheel drive vehicles from the 'go-anywhere' Defender to the luxurious Range Rover. The Rover marque has a reputation and tradition of refinement and performance which is continued today with the Company's small, medium and executive car ranges. The MG marque is the definitive British sports car as demonstrated in the MGF.

Major investment programmes in new models and advanced design and manufacturing techniques have resulted in a new, world-class generation of Rover, MG and Land Rover vehicles for the mid 1990s and beyond. The company holds the BS5750 quality certification and many awards for product and manufacturing excellence.

The Rover, MG and Land Rover model ranges are detailed on the following pages



Rover designs, manufactures and markets cars in the small, medium and executive sectors for sale in the UK and nearly 50 countries throughout the world.

A £1,200 million investment in new models and engines has resulted in major product programmes, and unprecedented success, with widely acclaimed new models, such as the Rover 100, 600 and 800 ranges. The latest new model is the Rover 400, a range of distinctive medium-sized cars firmly in the Rover heritage of advanced engineering with refinement and performance.

With the launch of the MGF, Rover has re-created the classic British sports car, renowned the world over for affordable performance and motoring pleasure.

All models are manufactured in the UK at Cowley, Oxford and at Longbridge, Birmingham.

PRODUCT RANGE



Rover 800 Coupe

The luxurious Rover 800 Coupe is the flagship of the Rover Cars model range and was announced in March 1992. Lavishly equipped, the 800 Coupe is powered by a V6 2.7 litre engine with manual or automatic transmission.



Rover 800 Series

The Rover 800 range of executive saloons was launched in November 1991. The fourteen car model range is available with 2.0-litre, turbocharged 2.0 litre or 2.7 litre petrol and 2.5 litre diesel turbo engines, and is available in either saloon or fastback versions.

PRODUCT RANGE



Rover 600 Series

The Rover 600 range of eight models was announced in April 1993. An elegant and distinctive family of four-door saloons in the premium upper-medium sector, the Rover 600 is available with 2.0 litre, turbocharged 2.0 litre or 2.3 litre petrol and 2.0 litre direct injection diesel engines.



Rover 400 Series

The new Rover 400 range was announced in March 1995 and brings executive qualities, including exceptional ride and handling characteristics, to the medium-sector. Initially there are six five-door variants with 1.4 litre and 1.6 litre engines. Four-door saloon models and two litre petrol or diesel engines will follow later.



Rover 400 Tourer

The Rover 400 Tourer was announced in March 1994 and is an upmarket estate car available in three models, with 1.6 litre or 2.0 litre petrol and 1.8 litre turbo diesel engines.



Rover 200 Series

The revised Rover 200 was announced in November 1993 and is a highly specified range of medium-sized hatchback models with options of 1.4 litre or 1.6 litre petrol and 1.8 litre diesel engines. The 200 Cabriolet, (pictured) launched in April 1992, is already established as a stylish alternative to saloon car motoring, offering a choice of 1.4 litre or 1.6 litre petrol engines



Rover 100 Series

The Rover 100 was launched in December 1994, featuring new standards of refinement with performance in the small car market sector. There are fifteen models in the range, with three and five-door hatchback versions powered by the award-winning K-Series engine of 1.1 and 1.4 litre capacity, and a 1.5 litre diesel. A Cabriolet variant joined the range in April 1995.



Mini

The Mini, launched in August 1959, introduced a new dimension to car design and a new motoring concept. There are four models all fitted with fuel injection, including the Mini Cooper 1.3i reviving memories of rally and motor sport successes in the 1960s. The Mini Cabriolet, the most luxurious Mini yet, was launched in June 1993.



MGF

The world-famous MG marque returns to full sports car production following its reveal at the Geneva Motorshow in March 1995. Two versions of the MGF – the 1.8i and 1.8i VVC – will be available, powered by a new 1.8 litre K-Series engine, the 1.8i VVC featuring a state-of-the-art, Variable Valve Control system.



MG RV8

The MG RV8 was introduced in October 1992 as a special edition model to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the MGB. Powered by a 3.9 litre petrol engine the MGR V8 features luxurious trim within an updated, stylish roadster body.



Rover 200 Coupe

The striking Rover 200 Coupe is a range of three high performance models powered by 1.6 litre, 2.0 litre and 2.0 litre turbocharged engines originally launched in October 1992 and revised in November 1993.



Land Rover is the name of the world's most famous and acclaimed specialist four-wheel drive vehicles. The range of Defender, Discovery, Classic Range Rover and Range Rover vehicles is sold in more than 100 markets throughout the world. Distribution in the major markets such as North America, Japan, Australia and South Africa – as well as key European markets – is through wholly owned Rover Group subsidiaries. In other markets import and sales are handled by independent distributors.

Land Rover Parts is responsible for marketing parts and accessories worldwide for the Land Rover product range.

All UK production of Land Rover vehicles takes place at the Land Rover factory at Solihull, West Midlands. Land Rover also has seven assembly plants around the world.

PRODUCT RANGE



New Range Rover

The New Range Rover was launched in the Autumn of 1994 and has already been widely acclaimed as the world's best off-road vehicle. It also sells as an alternative to luxury class cars around the world. Its flagship model, the Range Rover 4.6 HSE, has a 4.6 litre engine and other derivatives have either a 4.0 litre V8 petrol engine or a 2.5 litre BMW diesel engine. All models have dual airbags, ABS, and electronic air suspension as standard.



Classic Range Rover

The Classic Range Rover was first announced in 1970 and has been developed substantially in the past 25 years. It is sold around the world with a 3.9 V8 engine or a 2.5 litre diesel engine.

PRODUCT RANGE



Discovery

The Discovery range launched in November 1989 was extensively revised in 1994. A new interior and manual gearbox and a host of detailed improvements were introduced across the range along with exterior changes. The availability of twin airbags underlines the Discovery's position as a leader in safety in the leisure sector of the 4x4 market. Both three- and five-door versions are available with 3.9 V8 petrol engine or 2.5 litre direct injection diesel engine.



Defender

The Defender range of vehicles, announced in September 1990, is based on previous 90/110 models with the option of 2.5 litre petrol, 3.5 litre V8 petrol or 2.5 litre direct injection diesel engines. The Defender is the direct successor to the original Land Rover which has been in service in virtually every country in the world in its 47-year history, and is available in a variety of body and chassis combinations.



Special Vehicles

Land Rover Special Vehicles produce a wide range of variants of the Land Rover model range to meet specific customer requirements. Customers include public utilities and services as well as private owners who wish to personalise their Land Rovers.

COMPANY AND PRODUCT AWARDS

The Rover Group's five-year product renewal and investment programmes have resulted in the most ambitious and concentrated period of new vehicle launches in the Company's history.

The following awards have been made in the past two years and underline the exceptional success the Company and its new model ranges have achieved. In addition, the innovative capability of Rover Group's engineers in powertrain technology has produced a series of new engines, K-Series, L-Series (diesel) and T-Series which have received technical acclaim for unique design, method of manufacture and for setting new standards of performance for small and medium-sized engines.

The advances that the company as a whole has made, together with the contribution of its employees have also been recognised by a number of industry awards. The Group has achieved the coveted BS5750 quality standard and is the first co-winner of the British Quality Foundation's UK Quality Award.

Product Awards

- Rover 800
 - 1994 Best Executive Car – Fleet News Awards
- Discovery
 - 1994 New Cars Honours Awards – Auto Express
 - 1994 Off-road and 4 Wheel Drive Magazine – Off-roader of the Year
- Land Rover Defender
 - 1994 Four Wheeler of the Year – Four Wheeler American Magazine
- Land Rover Discovery TDiS– 1994 What Car? – Best Off-roader
- Rover 200
 - Fleet Excellence Award 1994 – Lower medium petrol cars sector
- Rover 600
 - Fleet Excellence Award 1994 – Executive petrol cars sector
- Land Rover Discovery
 - Fleet Excellence Award 1994 – 4x4 category
- Land Rover Discovery
 - Fleet News Best 4x4 1994
- Land Rover Discovery
 - Fleet Management in conjunction with Business Car Magazine Best 4x4 1994
- Land Rover Discovery
 - Overlander Magazine (Australia) 4WD of the Year 1994
- Land Rover Discovery ES
 - 4 x 4 Magazine (Australia) 'best release over \$46,000' 1994
- Land Rover Discovery
 - Bushdriver Magazine (Australia), 4WD Wagon of the Year 1994
- Range Rover
 - What Car? Best Off-roader 1995
- Rover 620 SDI
 - Diesel Cars of the Year 1995 – Best Big Family Diesel

COMPANY AND PRODUCT AWARDS



Rover 600 Diesel
1995 Best Big Family Diesel



Range Rover
1995 Off-roader of the Year.

Industry/Special Awards

- Rover Group
 - 1994 British Motoring Heritage Award for excellence and services to the local economy – Journal Publishing Company
- John Towers, Chief Executive
 - 1994 BAIE Business Communicator of the Year Award
- Rover Group Public Affairs
 - 1994 BAIE Business Communicator of the Year Team Award

Design and Technology Awards

- Rover 600
 - 1994 Design Council Award, British Design Council

Quality Awards

- Rover Group
 - British Quality Foundation UK Quality Award 1994

Education/Training Awards

- Rover Power Train
 - 1994 Investors in People Standard
- The Company also holds six Investors in People awards, seven regional training awards and a national training award, recognising its comprehensive education and training programmes for staff throughout the organisation.

Environmental Awards

- Rover Group
 - 1994 Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturing and Commerce, Environmental Management Award
- Rover Group
 - 1994 Energy Efficiency Accreditation Award for Energy Management

The motor industry is a global undertaking involving worldwide marketing, technological partnerships and joint ventures spanning continents.

Rover Group sells its Rover and Land Rover vehicle ranges in more than 100 markets. The company has wholly

owned sales organisations throughout Europe, North America, Japan, South Africa and Australia, with specialist importers in other territories.

The single objective is to provide extraordinary customer satisfaction wherever Rover and Land Rover vehicles are in use.

Abu Dhabi
Algeria
Angola
Argentina
Austria
Australia*
Azores
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belgium*
Bolivia
Brazil
Brunei
Bulgaria
Burundi
Cameroon

French Guiana
Gabon
Germany*
Ghana
Gibraltar
Gilbert Islands
Greece

Iceland
Indonesia
Ireland
Israel
Italy*
Jamaica
Japan*
Jordan
Kenya
Korea
Kuwait
Lebanon
Liberia
Libya
Luxembourg
Macau
Madagascar

Panama
Papua New Guinea
Paraguay
Peru
Poland
Portugal*
Qatar
Republic of Yemen
Reunion Island
Russia
Rwanda
Sabah
St Kitts
Sarawak
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Seychelles

Turkey
Uganda

Uruguay
United States*
Vanuatu
Venezuela

Canada
Canaries
Chile
Colombia
Costa Rica
Croatia
Cyprus
Denmark
Dominican Republic
Dubai
Ecuador
Egypt
El Salvador
Ethiopia
Falkland Islands
Finland
France*

Guadeloupe
Guatemala
Guinea-Conakry
Guyana
Haiti
Honduras
Hong Kong
Hungary

Malawi
Malaysia
Malta
Martinique
Mauritania
Mauritius
Morocco
Mozambique
Nepal
Netherlands*
New Caledonia
New Zealand
Nicaragua
Nigeria
Norway
Oman
Pakistan

Sierra Leone
Singapore
Slovenia
South Africa*
Spain*
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Sultanate of Oman
Sweden
Switzerland
Tahiti
Taiwan
Tanzania
Thailand
Tonga
Trinidad & Tobago
Tunisia

Western Samoa
Zaire
Zanzibar
Zambia
Zimbabwe

*Denotes National Sales Company

ROVER GROUP'S WORLDWIDE OPERATIONS

Rover Group's successful new product programme is spearheading expansion of existing international markets and the creation of new business opportunities throughout the world.

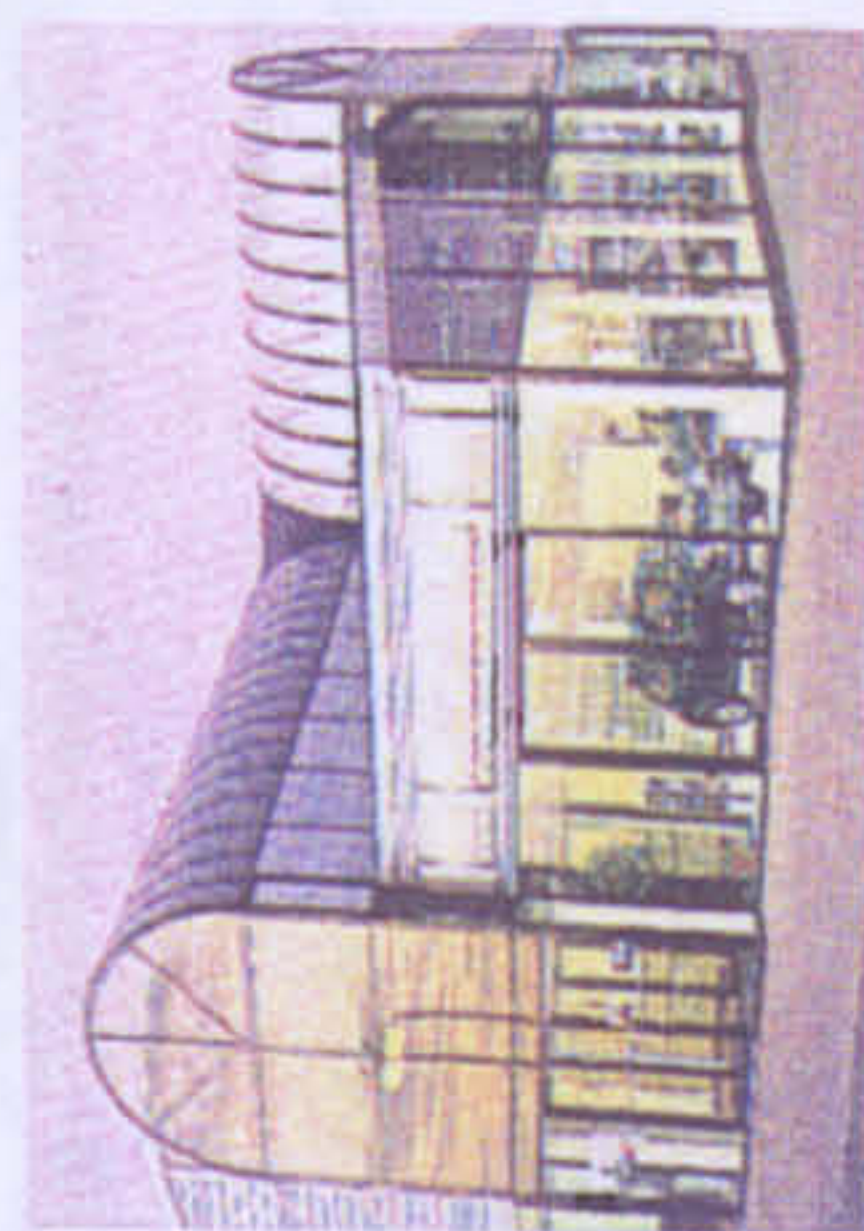
Rover has wholly owned organisations for sales within Rover's major European markets, including the UK, and is investing heavily in expanding dealer networks in key markets such as Germany, while developing new markets within an expanding European trade area. Outside Western Europe Rover is creating new ventures in South America, Africa, the Middle East, Asia Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe. These ventures typically feature joint ventures with local interests in the sale and distribution of vehicles and, in some cases, involve technical assistance or technology transfer to create local manufacture of Rover products. The Company has seen rapid growth in North America, Japan and Australia where it has national sales companies and has recently established a new presence in South Africa.



An example is a major partnership project with the Republic of Indonesia to develop the indigenous motor industry through advanced technology transfer and technical assistance.

Rover Group and Indonesia interests have agreed to develop a new small car, initially for the Indonesian market, which will extend car ownership to a larger sector of the population.

The car is specifically designed for local market conditions in a region of rapid economic growth.



Throughout Rover's worldwide operations there is a strong corporate identity, based on the heritage of the Land Rover and Rover marques with high standards of customer care and sales and service support wherever a Land Rover or Rover vehicle is sold.

Rover Group has local assembly operations in a number of markets for its Land Rover and Rover vehicles as follows:

Land Rover	
Australia	- Defender
Kenya	- Defender
Malaysia	- Defender
Morocco	- Defender
South Africa	- Defender
Turkey	- Defender
Zimbabwe	- Defender

Rover	
Bulgaria	- Maestro
India	- Montego
Venezuela	- Mini

The vehicles produced are assembled from components transported from Rover Group's UK factories and from locally sourced suppliers as appropriate to the particular market.



The development of Rover Group associates and the training of dealer personnel is a pivotal part of the company's investment programmes. The Rover Learning Business, an organisation within Rover invests about £30 million a year operating courses and development programmes in the UK and throughout the world. This ensures the highest standards of customer care wherever Rover and Land Rover vehicles are sold, backed by a comprehensive range of after-sales services.



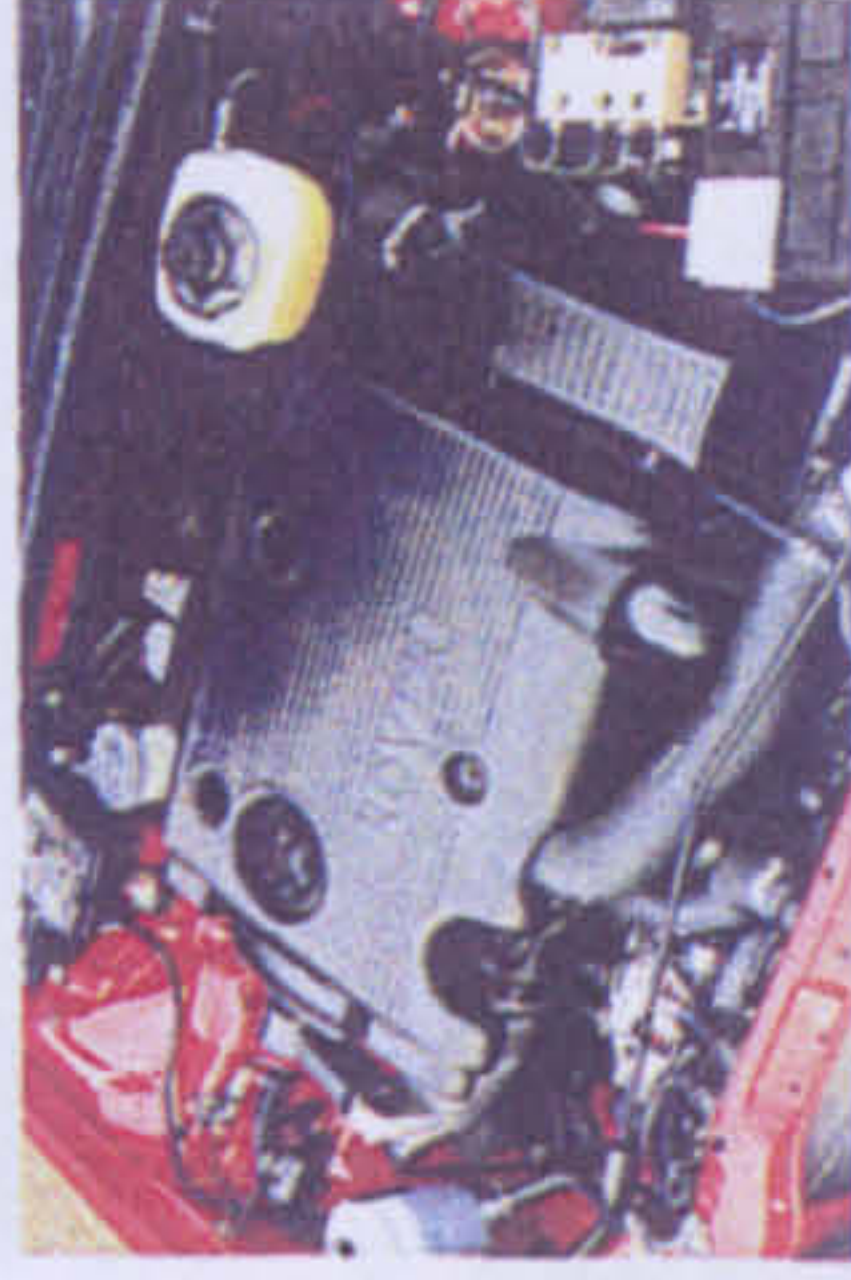
Rover and Land Rover dealerships are investing in advanced systems to facilitate car selection and servicing. Innovative new vehicle distribution techniques are being introduced to shorten delivery times between factory and showroom ensuring that customers receive 'factory-fresh' vehicles.

The heart of a car is its engine and Rover engineers have developed advanced and innovative designs for the latest generation of power units for both Rover and Land Rover models. Petrol and diesel powered engines have been designed to give outstanding refinement and performance together with environmental advances in fuel economy and 'lean-burn' technology which results in cleaner engine emissions.

Rover and Land Rover historically offered the largest number of catalyst equipped cars in the UK and which are now standard across the model ranges.

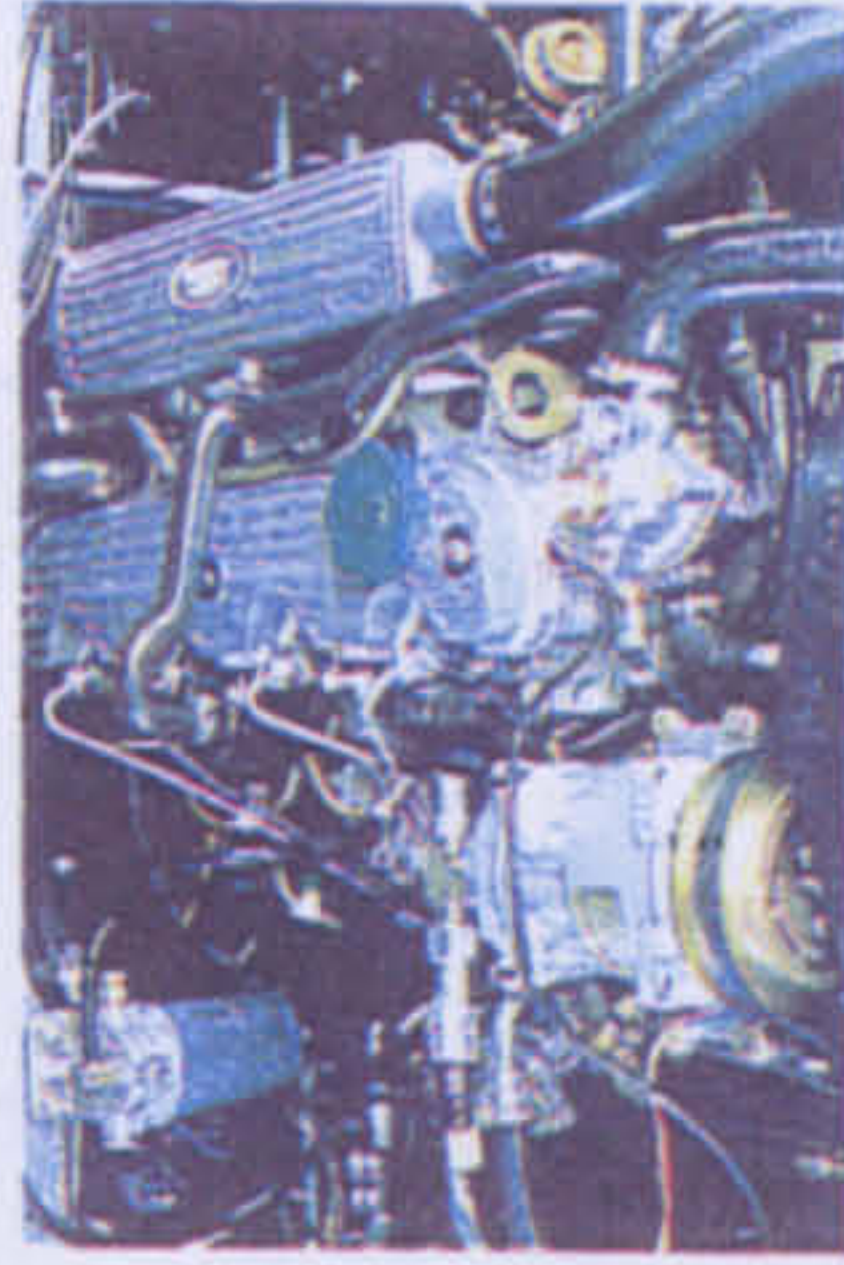
The company's environmental policy extends to all its activities, including manufacturing processes, where CFCs are being eliminated, lead-free paint processes adopted and recyclable parts identified for future re-use.

Rover has started the UK's first vehicle recycling research project to increase the re-use of materials and to eliminate, as far as possible, waste by-products of vehicle disposal. Energy costs to build vehicles have dropped by 60 per cent in the past 10 years as a result of stringent energy management in the company's factories.



Rover L-Series engine

The new L-Series diesel engine is a 4-cylinder, 1994 cc, electronically controlled, direct injection unit. Fitted with an oxidation catalyst and fully modulated, closed loop EGR (Exhaust Gas Re-circulation) system, the L-Series already meets the 1997 ECD 2 Emissions standards.



Land Rover 300 Tdi engine

The Land Rover 2.5 litre turbo charged intercooled high speed direct injection engine represents the latest diesel technology, combining class-leading fuel economy and emissions substantially below legislative limits. The high torque (pulling power) at low engine speeds delivers excellent road, off-road and towing capability. The 300 Tdi engine is used in the Discovery and Defender and Range Rover vehicles and has received the Queen's Award for Technological Achievement.

Queen's Award for Technological Achievement.

Sales Revenue

Total Sales revenue in 1994 was £4,946 million* confirming the company's position as the UK's leading car producer.

Export Revenue

Export sales revenue totalled £2,428 million* with 48 per cent of Rover Group's total sales made in export markets.

Vehicle Sales

Vehicle sales totalled 475,500 units with Rover Cars sales totalling 385,400 units and Land Rover sales totalling 90,100 units.

Vehicle Production

Total production was 478,600 units of which 384,100 units were Rover cars and 94,500 were Land Rover vehicles.

*consolidated figures.

ROVER GROUP AND THE UK ECONOMY

Largest manufacturer

The Rover Group is the UK motor industry's largest manufacturer, producing three out of every ten cars built in Britain and accounting for over a quarter of all British car exports.

The Company's activities support some 110,000 people in the UK's manufacturing and retail/distribution sectors. The company spends £3,500 million annually on materials and services bought from companies world-wide, but predominately from European sources.

ROVER GROUP LOCATIONS

The Group has three vehicle assembly factories and a number of component plants, product proving, engineering and administrative locations in the UK. The Group headquarters is at Bickenhill, Birmingham near the National Exhibition Centre.



Rover Group's largest car factory is at Longbridge, near Birmingham, where Rover 200, Rover 400, Metro and Mini models are assembled. The factory manufactures the MGF sports car in a specialist area. Also produced at Longbridge are engines, transmissions and castings.

ROVER GROUP LOCATIONS



The Land Rover factory at Solihull, produces the full range of Land Rover models, Range Rover, Defender, Discovery and Range Rover Classic and engines, transmissions and components. Solihull also is home to 'The Land Rover Driving Experience' where owners are able to undergo tuition in off-road driving skills. The special vehicles division is also based at Solihull, producing non-standard special derivatives of the Land Rover vehicle range.



The Cowley complex at Oxford produces Rover's executive car range, the Rover 800, Rover 600, and MG RV8. It also has tool manufacture, body engineering, service and product training departments on site.



The Swindon factory contains state-of-the-art body pressing facilities, including advanced tri-axis presses and is the main supplier of car body pressings to Rover. The factory also supplies body pressings to a number of external customers.

Below

The new Range Rover, already acclaimed as the world's best off-road luxury vehicle.

Back Cover

The Rover 600, established as a distinctive and stylish addition to the Rover range.





ROVER GROUP

FACTS & FIGURES



1996



Front Cover:

The new Rover 200, a distinctly different small Rover announced in October 1995

Below:

The new Rover 400 Series, announced in March 1995, is a new generation medium-sized car range in the distinctive Rover style.



ROVER GROUP

THE COMPANY IN BRIEF

The Rover Group is Britain's largest motor manufacturer producing approximately half a million vehicles a year. The Group designs, manufactures and markets Rover small, medium and executive cars; MG sports cars and Land Rover specialist four-wheel drive vehicles.

The Company has annual sales of £5,650 million and exports its vehicles to about 100 countries worldwide earning over £2,600 million in overseas sales each year.

Major market areas are Western Europe, Japan, North America and Australia with an increasing presence in Asia, South America, South Africa and the Pacific Rim and a growing number of international joint projects and technology transfer programmes throughout the world.

Rover Group is a major employer with 40,000 people working for the company in the UK and internationally. A further 110,000 people work within companies supplying Rover Group with production material and services and in the 3,300 dealers and specialist distributors selling the company's vehicles worldwide.

Rover Group's products divide into three distinct vehicle ranges. Land Rover is acknowledged as the world leader in four-wheel drive vehicles from the 'go-anywhere' Defender to the luxurious Range Rover. The Rover marque has a reputation and tradition of refinement and performance which is continued today with the Company's small, medium and executive car ranges. The MG marque is the definitive British sports car as demonstrated in the MGF.

Major investment programmes in new models and advanced design and manufacturing techniques have resulted in a new, world-class generation of Rover, MG and Land Rover vehicles for the mid 1990s and beyond. The Company holds the BS5750 quality certification and many awards for product and manufacturing excellence.

The Rover, MG and Land Rover model ranges are detailed on the following pages



Rover Group Ltd, International House, Bickenhill Lane, Birmingham B37 7HQ

Telephone: 0121-782 8000 Fax: 0121-781 7000

ROVER CARS

Rover designs, manufactures and markets cars in the small, medium and executive sectors for sale in the UK and nearly 50 countries throughout the world.

A £1,500 million investment in new models and engines has resulted in major product programmes, and unprecedented success, with widely acclaimed new models, across the whole Rover Cars' range. During 1995 three new models were announced; the Rover 400 Series in four- and five-door forms, the innovative and unique MGF sports car and, most recently the Rover 200 Series.

The new Rover 200 is a range of small hatchback cars, building on the Rover heritage of advanced engineering, refinement and performance, with an emphasis on youthful styling and dynamic performance.

All models are manufactured in the UK at Cowley, Oxford and at Longbridge, Birmingham.

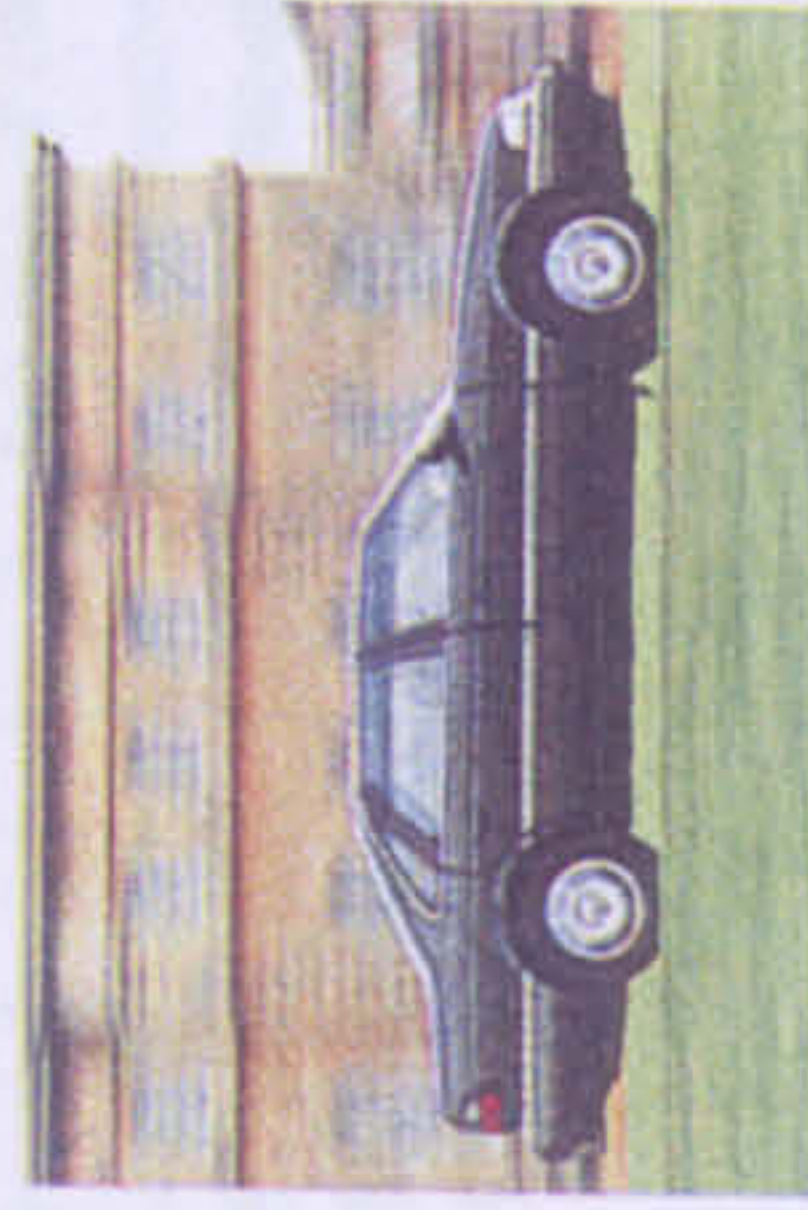
PRODUCT RANGE



Rover 800 Coupe

The luxurious Rover 800 Coupe is the flagship of the Rover Cars model range and was announced in March 1992. Lavishly equipped, the 800 Coupe is powered by the latest

Rover KV6 2.5 litre engine with manual or automatic transmission.



Rover 800 Series

The Rover 800 range of executive saloons was launched in November 1991. The ten model range is available with 2.0 litre, turbocharged 2.0 litre or KV6 2.5 litre petrol and 2.5 litre diesel turbo engines, and is available in either saloon or fastback versions.



PRODUCT RANGE



Rover 600 Series

The Rover 600 range of ten models was announced in April 1993. An elegant and distinctive family of four-door saloons in the premium upper-medium sector, the Rover 600 is available with 1.8 and 2.0 litre, turbocharged 2.0 litre or 2.3 litre petrol and 2.0 litre direct injection diesel engines.



Rover 400 Series

The new Rover 400 range was announced in March 1995 and brings executive qualities, including exceptional ride and handling characteristics, to the medium-sector. There are sixteen five-door variants with 1.4, 1.6 and 2.0 litre petrol and 2.0 litre direct injection diesel engines. Twelve variants of the four-door saloon models are available with 1.6 and 2.0 litre petrol and 2.0 litre direct injection diesel engines.



Rover Tourer

The Rover Tourer was announced in March 1994 and is an upmarket estate car available in three models, with 1.6 litre or 1.8 litre K-Series petrol and 1.8 litre turbo diesel engines.



PRODUCT RANGE



Rover 200 Series

The revised Rover 200 was announced in October 1995 and is a highly specified range of medium-sized three- and five-door hatchback models with options of 1.4, 1.6 and 1.8 litre petrol and 2.0 litre direct injection diesel engines.



Rover 100 Series

The Rover 100 was launched in December 1994, featuring new standards of refinement with performance in the small car market sector. There are fifteen models in the range, with three- and five-door hatchback versions powered by the award-winning K-Series engine of 1.1 and 1.4 litre capacity, and a 1.5 litre diesel. A Cabriolet variant joined the range in April 1995.



Mini

The Mini, launched in August 1959, introduced a new dimension to car design and a new motoring concept. There are four models all fitted with fuel injection, including the Mini Cooper 1.3i reviving memories of rally and motor sport successes in the 1960s. The Mini Cabriolet, the most luxurious Mini yet, was launched in June 1993.



PRODUCT RANGE



Rover Coupe

The striking Rover Coupe is a range of two high performance models powered by 1.6 litre and 1.8 litre K-Series engines and was originally launched in October 1992 and revised in the spring of 1996.



Rover Cabriolet

The Rover Cabriolet was originally launched in April 1992 and is already established as a stylish alternative to saloon car motoring, powered by the 1.6 litre K-Series petrol engine.



MGF

With the launch of the MGF, MG has been recreated as the classic British sports car, renowned the world over for affordable performance and motoring pleasure. The world-famous MG marque has returned to full sports car production following its reveal at the Geneva Motorshow in March 1995. Two versions of the MGF – the 1.8i and 1.8i VVC – are available, powered by a new 1.8 litre K-Series engine, the 1.8i VVC featuring a state-of-the-art, Variable Valve Control system.



LAND ROVER

Land Rover is the name of the world's most famous and acclaimed specialist four-wheel drive vehicles. The range of Defender, Discovery and Range Rover vehicles is sold in more than 100 markets throughout the world. Distribution in the major markets such as North America, Japan, Australia and South Africa – as well as key European markets – is through wholly-owned Rover Group subsidiaries. In other markets import and sales are handled by independent distributors.

Land Rover Parts is responsible for marketing parts and accessories worldwide for the

Land Rover product range.

All UK production of Land Rover vehicles takes place at the Land Rover factory in

Solihull, West Midlands. Land Rover also has seven assembly plants around the world.



New Range Rover

The New Range Rover was launched in the Autumn of 1994. Already widely acclaimed as the world's best off-road vehicle, it sells as an alternative to conventional luxury class cars around the world. Its flagship model, the Range Rover 4.6 HSE, has a 4.6 litre V8 engine and other derivatives have either a 4.0 litre V8 petrol engine or a 2.5 litre BMW turbo diesel engine. All models have dual airbags, ABS, and electronic air suspension as standard.



PRODUCT RANGE



Discovery

Launched in November 1989 the Discovery range was extensively revised in 1994. A new interior and manual gearbox and a host of detailed improvements were introduced across the range along with exterior changes. The availability of twin airbags underlines Discovery's position as a leader in safety in the leisure sector of the 4x4 market.

Both three- and five- door versions are available with either a 3.9 V8 petrol engine or 2.5 litre direct injection diesel engine.



Defender

The Defender, announced in September 1990, represents the latest generation of the 90/110 range fitted with the 300 Tdi 2.5 litre direct injection diesel engine. The Defender is the direct successor to the original Land Rover which has been in service in virtually every country in the world in its 48-year history, and is available in a variety of body and chassis combinations.



Special Vehicles

Land Rover Special Vehicles produce a wide range of variants of the Land Rover model range to meet specific customer requirements. Customers include public utilities and services as well as private owners who wish to personalise their Land Rovers.



ROVER GROUP'S WORLDWIDE OPERATIONS

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Algeria
Angola
Argentina
Austria
Australia*
Azores
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belgium*
Bolivia
Brazil
Brunei
Bulgaria
Burundi
Cameroon

France*
French Guiana
Gabon
Germany*
Ghana
Gibraltar
Gilbert Islands

Hungary
Iceland
Indonesia
Ireland
Israel
Italy*
Jamaica
Japan*
Jordan
Kenya
Korea
Kuwait
Lebanon
Liberia
Libya
Luxembourg
Macau

Pakistan
Panama
Papua New Guinea
Paraguay
Peru
Poland
Portugal*
Qatar
Republic of Yemen
Reunion Island
Russia
Rwanda
Sabah
St Kitts
Sarawak
Saudi Arabia
Senegal

Tunisia
Turkey

Uganda
Uruguay
United States*
Vanuatu

Canada
Canaries
Chile
Colombia
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Croatia
Cyprus
Denmark
Dominican Republic
Dubai
Ecuador
Egypt
El Salvador
Ethiopia
Falkland Islands
Finland

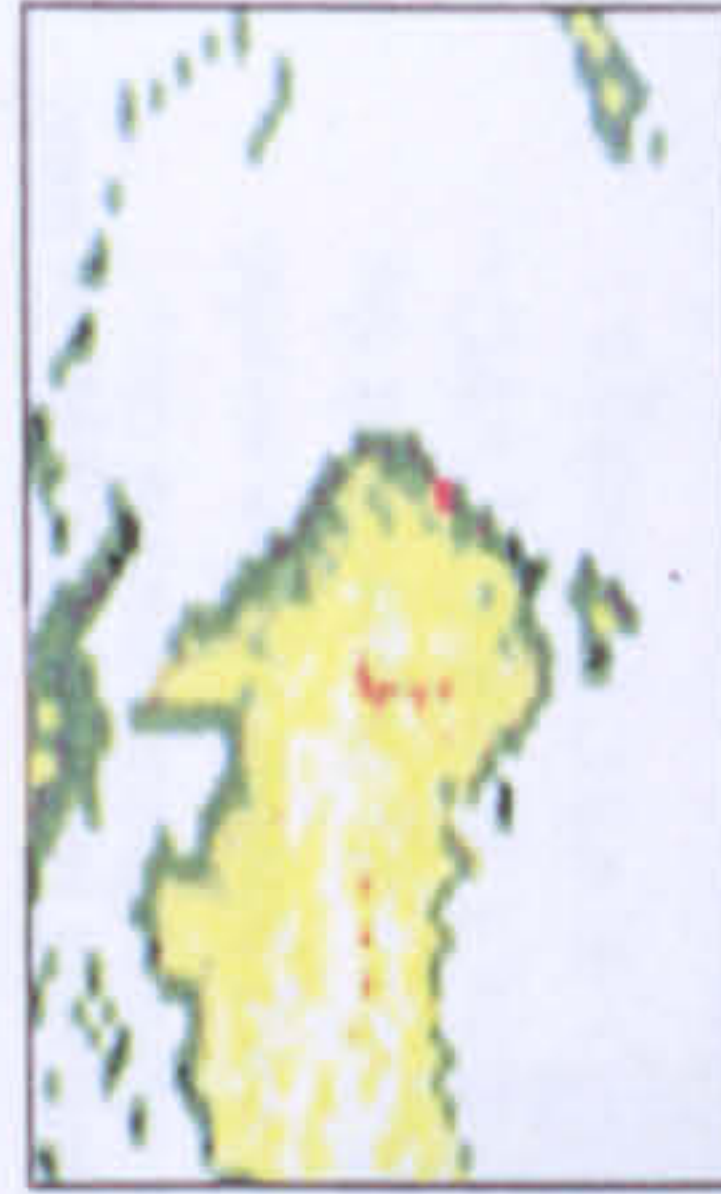
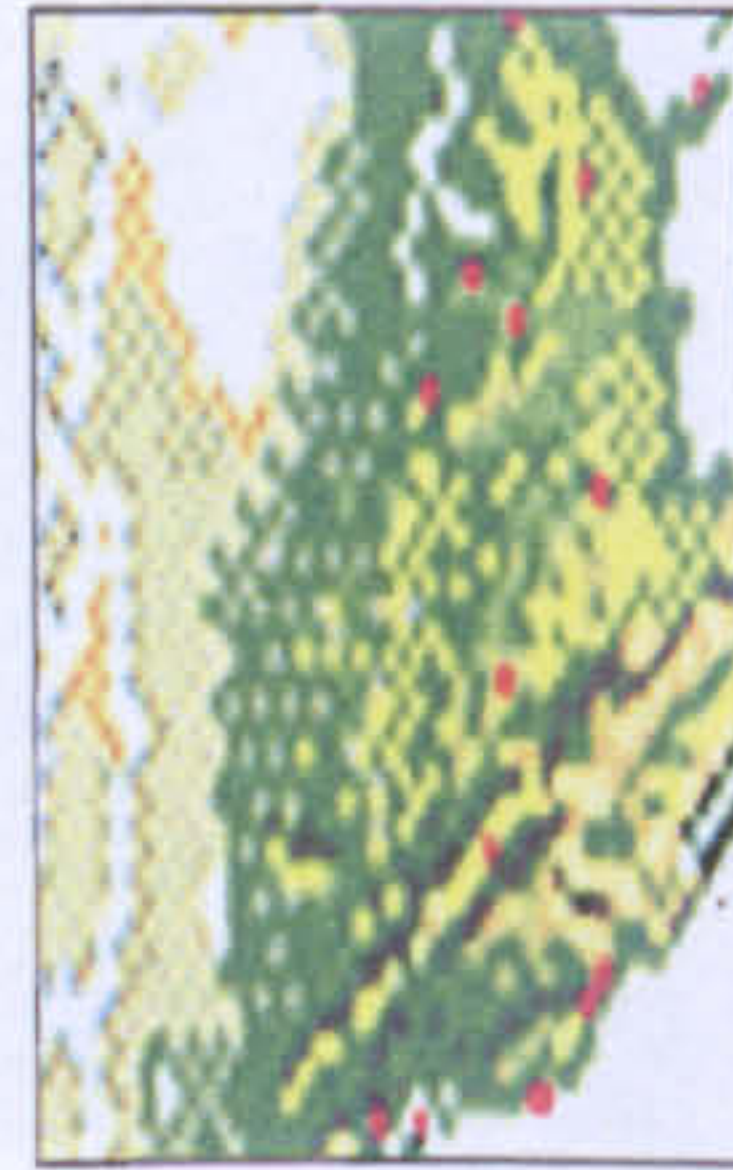
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Mauritania
Mauritius
Morocco
Mozambique
Nepal
Netherlands*
New Caledonia
New Zealand
Nicaragua
Nigeria
Norway
Oman

Seychelles
Sierra Leone
Singapore
Slovenia
South Africa*
Spain*
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Sultanate of Oman
Sweden
Switzerland
Tahiti
Taiwan
Tanzania
Thailand
Tonga
Trinidad & Tobago

Venezuela
Western Samoa
Zaire
Zanzibar
Zambia
Zimbabwe

*Denotes National Sales Company



ROVER GROUP'S WORLDWIDE OPERATIONS

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An example is a major partnership project with KIA to develop the new KV6 engine for further applications. Also the Land Rover 300 Tdi diesel engine is being produced under licence in Argentina for commercial applications.



Throughout Rover's worldwide operations there is a strong corporate identity, based on the heritage of the Land Rover and Rover marques with high standards of customer care and sales and service support wherever a Land Rover or Rover vehicle is sold.

Rover Group has local assembly operations in a number of markets for its Land Rover and Rover vehicles as follows:

Land Rover	Rover
Australia – Defender	Bulgaria – Maestro
Kenya – Defender	India – Montego
Malaysia – Defender	Venezuela – Mini
Morocco – Defender	
South Africa – Defender	
Turkey – Defender	
Zimbabwe – Defender	

The vehicles produced are assembled from components transported from Rover Group's UK factories and from locally sourced suppliers as appropriate to the particular market.



The development of Rover Group associates and the training of dealer personnel is a pivotal part of the company's investment programmes. The Rover Learning Business, an organisation within Rover invests about £30 million a year operating courses and development programmes in the UK and throughout the world. This ensures the highest standards of customer care wherever Rover and Land Rover vehicles are sold, backed by a comprehensive range of after-sales services.



Rover and Land Rover dealerships are investing in advanced systems to facilitate car selection and servicing. Innovative new vehicle distribution techniques are being introduced to shorten delivery times between factory and showroom ensuring that customers receive 'factory-fresh' vehicles.



Rover 600 Diesel
1995 Best Big Family Diesel



Range Rover
1995 Off-roader of the Year.

Industry/Special Awards

- Rover Group* – 1994 British Motoring Heritage Award for excellence and services to the local economy – Journal Publishing Company
- John Towers, Chief Executive* – 1994 BAIE Business Communicator of the Year Award
- Rover Group Public Affairs* – 1994 BAIE Business Communicator of the Year Team Award

Design and Technology Awards

- Rover 600* – 1994 Design Council Award, British Design Council
- L-Series engine* – 1995 Engineer of the Year Award
- Holovision Technology* – 1995 Dewar Trophy

Quality Awards

- Rover Group* – 1994 British Quality Foundation UK Quality Award

Education/Training Awards

- Rover Power Train* – 1994 Investors in People Standard
- The Company also holds six Investors in People awards, seven regional training awards and a national training award, recognising its comprehensive education and training programmes for staff throughout the organisation

Environmental Awards

- Rover Group* – 1994 Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturing and Commerce, Environmental Management Award
- Rover Group* – 1994 Energy Efficiency Accreditation Award for Energy Management

COMPANY AND PRODUCT AWARDS

The Rover Group's recent product renewal and investment programmes have resulted in the most ambitious and concentrated period of new vehicle launches in the Company's history. The following awards have been made in the past two years and underline the exceptional success the Company and its new model ranges have achieved. In addition, the innovative capability of Rover Group's engineers in powertrain technology has produced a series of new engines, K-Series, L-Series (diesel) and T-Series which have received technical acclaim for unique design, method of manufacture and for setting new standards of performance for small and medium-sized engines.

The advances that the company as a whole has made, together with the contribution of its employees have also been recognised by a number of industry awards. The Group has achieved the coveted BS5750 quality standard and is the first co-winner of the British Quality Foundation's UK Quality Award.

Product Awards

- Rover 800* – 1994 Best Executive Car – Fleet News Awards
- Discovery* – 1994 New Cars Honours Awards – Auto Express
- 1994 Off-road and 4 Wheel Drive Magazine – Off-roader of the Year
- Land Rover Defender* – 1994 Four Wheeler of the Year – Four Wheeler American Magazine
- Land Rover Discovery TDiS* – 1994 What Car? – Best Off-roader
- Rover 200* – Fleet Excellence Award 1994 – Lower medium petrol cars sector
- Rover 600* – Fleet Excellence Award 1994 – Executive petrol cars sector
- Land Rover Discovery* – Fleet Excellence Award 1994 – 4x4 category
- Land Rover Discovery* – Fleet News Best 4x4 1994
- Land Rover Discovery* – Fleet Management in conjunction with Business Car Magazine Best 4x4 1994
- Land Rover Discovery* – Overlander Magazine (Australia) 4WD of the Year 1994
- Land Rover Discovery ES* – 4 x 4 Magazine (Australia) 'best release over \$46,000' 1994
- Land Rover Discovery* – Bushdriver Magazine (Australia), 4WD Wagon of the Year 1994
- Range Rover* – What Car? Best Off-roader 1995
- Rover 620 SDI* – Diesel Cars of the Year 1995 – Best Big Family Diesel
- Mini* – Car of the Century, Autocar magazine.
- MGF* – Japanese Car of the Year.

ENGINE TECHNOLOGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The heart of a car is its engine and Rover engineers have developed advanced and innovative designs for the latest generation of power units for both Rover and Land Rover models. Petrol and diesel powered engines have been designed to give outstanding refinement and performance together with environmental advances in fuel economy and 'lean-burn' technology which results in cleaner engine emissions.

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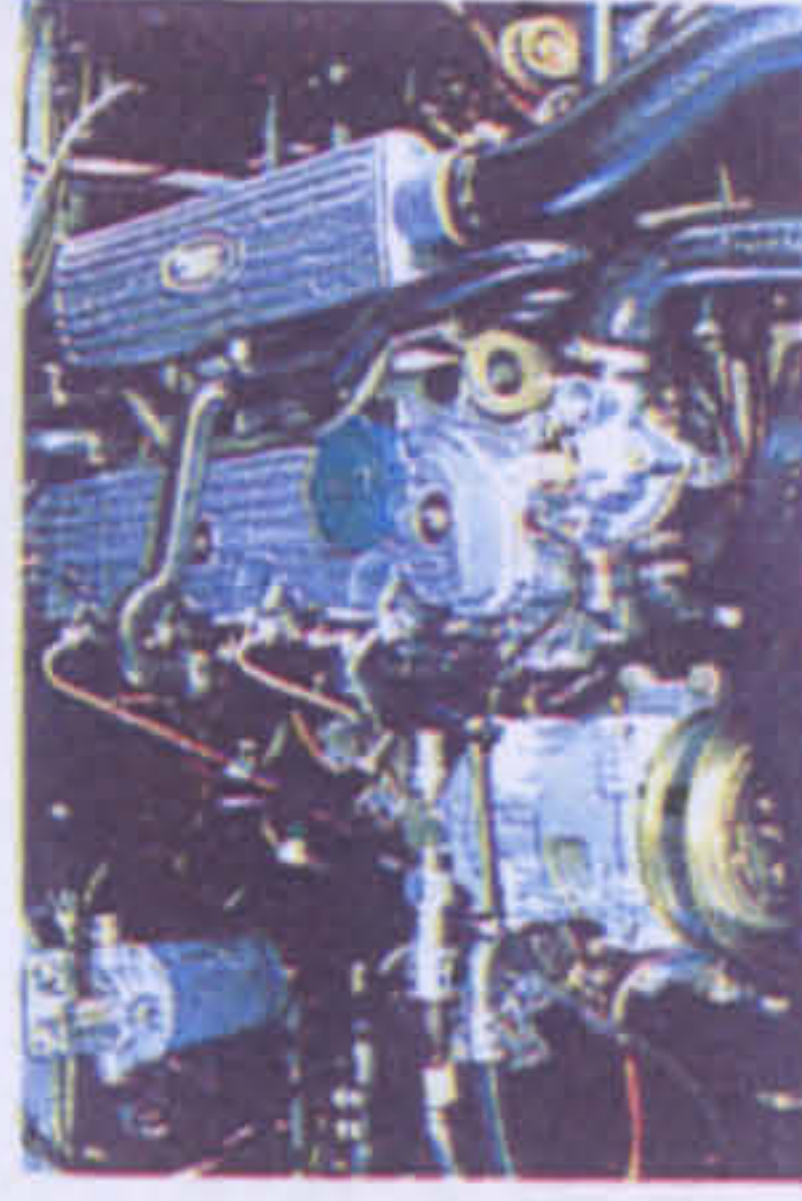
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Rover KV6 engine

The new KV6 quad-cam 2.5 litre V6 engine, was launched in January 1996 as the flagship powerunit for the latest Rover 800 Series. Technical features include DOHC per bank, 2497cc, 4 valves/cylinder and a power output of 175Ps @ 6500rpm.



Land Rover 300 Tdi engine

The Land Rover 2.5 litre turbo charged intercooled high speed direct injection engine represents the latest diesel technology, combining class-leading fuel economy and emissions substantially below legislative limits. The high torque (pulling power) at low engine speeds delivers excellent road, off-road and towing capability. The 300 Tdi engine is used in the Discovery and Defender and Range Rover vehicles and has received the Queen's Award for Technological Achievement.

ROVER GROUP PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

Sales Revenue 1995

Total Sales revenue in 1994 was £5,651 million* confirming the Company's position as the UK's leading car producer.

Export Revenue 1995

Export sales revenue totalled £2,613 million* with 48 per cent of Rover Group's total sales made in export markets.

Vehicle Sales 1995

Vehicle sales totalled 483,100 units with Rover Cars sales totalling 367,510 units and Land Rover sales totalling 115,590 units.

Vehicle Production 1995

Total production was 501,300 units of which 374,000 units were Rover cars and 127,300 were Land Rover vehicles.

*consolidated figures.

ROVER GROUP AND THE UK ECONOMY

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Below

The new Range Rover, already acclaimed as the world's best off-road luxury vehicle.

Back Cover

The Rover 800 range enhanced by the new KV6 engine.





ROVER GROUP

FACTS & FIGURES



1997

Front Cover:

The Rover 200, a distinctly different small Rover announced in October 1995.

Below:

The Rover 400 Series, announced in March 1995, is a new generation medium-sized car range in the distinctive Rover style.



ROVER GROUP

THE COMPANY IN BRIEF

The Rover Group is Britain's largest motor manufacturer producing approximately half a million vehicles a year. The Group designs, manufactures and markets Rover small, medium and executive cars; Mini cars; MG sports cars and Land Rover specialist four-wheel drive vehicles.

The Company has annual sales of £6,475 million and exports its vehicles to about 100 countries worldwide earning over £3,080 million in overseas sales each year.

Major market areas are Western Europe, Japan, North America and Australia with an increasing presence in Asia, South America, South Africa and the Pacific Rim and a growing number of international joint projects and technology transfer programmes throughout the world.

Rover Group is a major employer with 39,000 people working for the company in the UK and internationally. A further 110,000 people work within companies supplying Rover Group with production material and services and in the 3,300 dealers and specialist distributors selling the company's vehicles worldwide.

Rover Group's products divide into three distinct vehicle ranges. Land Rover is acknowledged as the world leader in four-wheel drive vehicles from the 'go-anywhere' Defender to the luxurious Range Rover. The Rover marque has a reputation and tradition of refinement and performance which is continued today with the Company's small, medium and executive car ranges. The MG marque is the definitive British sports car as demonstrated in the MGF.

Major investment programmes in new models and advanced design and manufacturing techniques have resulted in a new, world-class generation of Rover, MG and Land Rover vehicles for the 1990s and beyond. The Company holds the BS5750 quality certification and many awards for product and manufacturing excellence.

The Rover, MG, Mini and Land Rover model ranges are detailed on the following pages

ROVER CARS

Rover designs, manufactures and markets cars in the small, medium and executive sectors for sale in the UK and nearly 50 countries throughout the world.

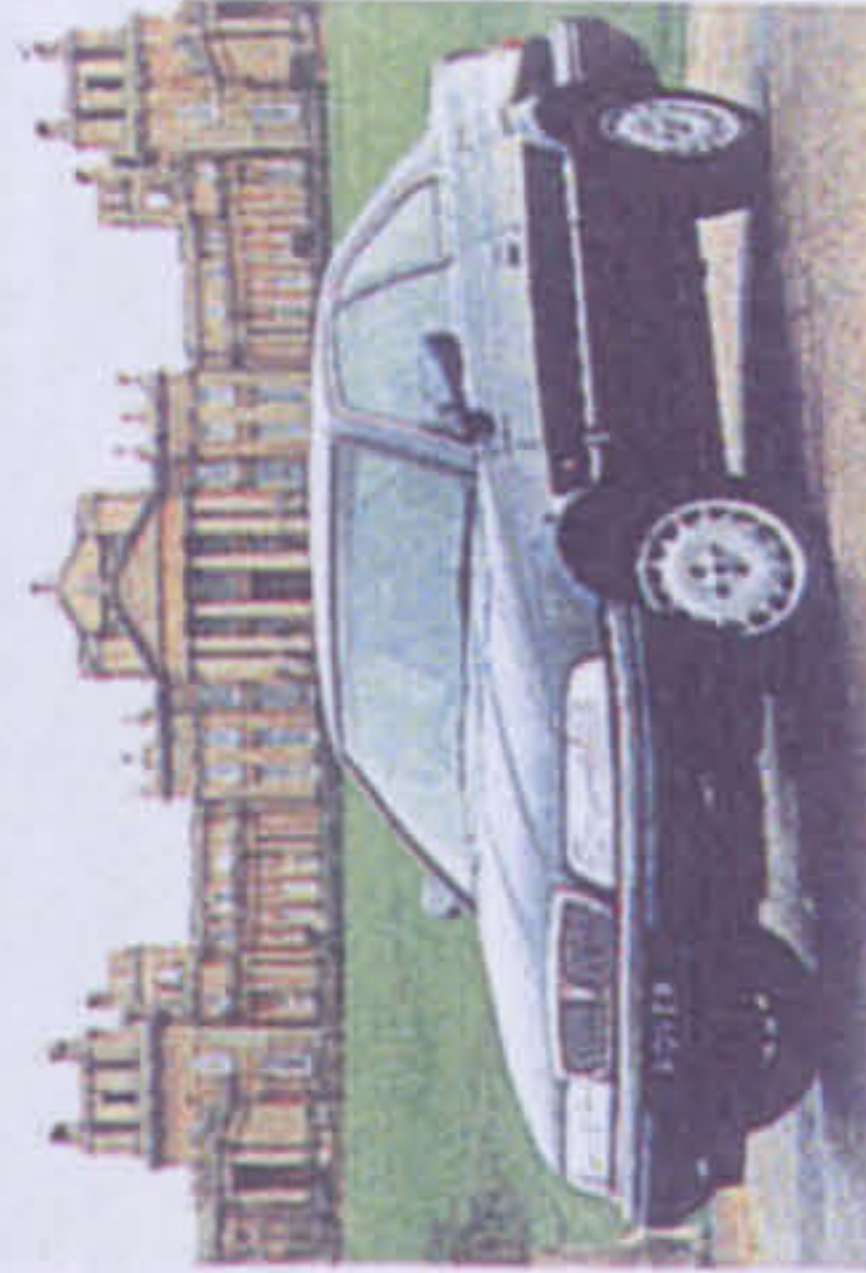
The new model programme has resulted in three models, the Rover 400 Series in four- and five-door forms, the innovative and unique MGF sports car and, most recently the

Rover 200 Series being progressively introduced to world markets.

The Rover 200 is a range of small hatchback cars, building on the Rover heritage of advanced engineering, refinement and performance, with an emphasis on youthful styling and dynamic performance.

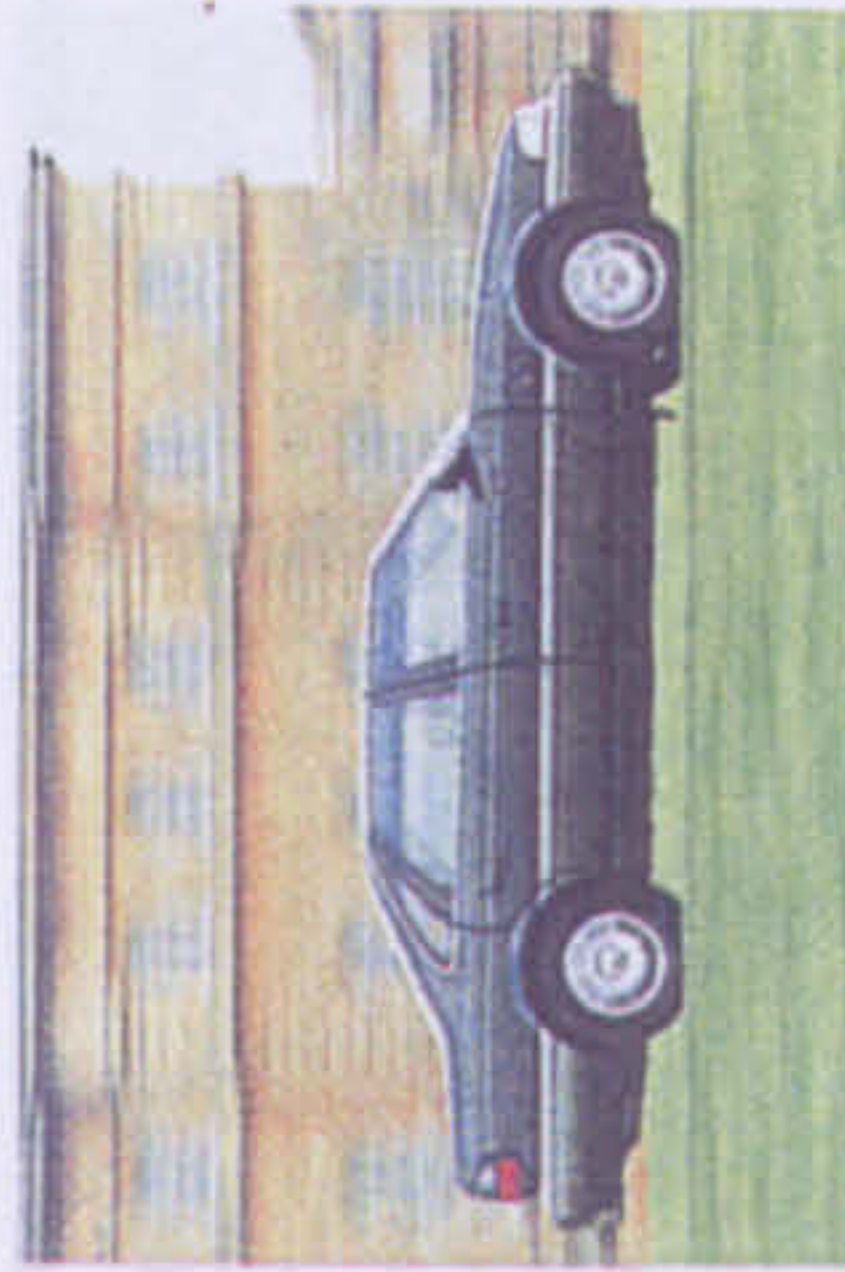
All models are manufactured in the UK at Cowley, Oxford and at Longbridge, Birmingham.

PRODUCT RANGE



Rover 800 Coupe

The luxurious Rover 800 Coupe is the flagship of the Rover Cars model range and was announced in March 1992. Lavishly equipped, the 800 Coupe, available in three trim levels, is powered by the latest Rover KV6 2.5 litre engine with manual or automatic transmission.



Rover 800 Series

The Rover 800 range of executive saloons was launched in November 1991. The nine model range is available with 2.0 litre, turbocharged 2.0 litre or KV6 2.5 litre petrol and 2.5 litre diesel turbo engines, and is available in either saloon or fastback versions.

PRODUCT RANGE



Rover 600 Series

The Rover 600 range of eleven models was announced in April 1993. An elegant and distinctive family of four-door saloons in the premium upper-medium sector, the Rover 600 is available with 1.8 and 2.0 litre, turbocharged 2.0 litre or 2.3 litre petrol and 2.0 litre direct injection diesel engines.



Rover 400 Series

The new Rover 400 range was announced in March 1995 and brings executive qualities, including exceptional ride and handling characteristics, to the medium-sector. There are fourteen five-door variants with 1.4, 1.6 and 2.0 litre petrol and 2.0 litre direct injection diesel engines. Twelve variants of the four-door saloon models are available with 1.6 and 2.0 litre petrol and 2.0 litre direct injection diesel engines.



Rover Tourer

The Rover Tourer was announced in March 1994 and is an upmarket estate car available in three models, with a 1.6 litre petrol engine.

PRODUCT RANGE



Rover 200 Series

The Rover 200 was announced in October 1995 and is a highly specified range of medium-sized three- and five-door hatchback models with options of 1.4, 1.6 and 1.8 litre petrol and 2.0 litre direct injection diesel engines.



Rover 100 Series

The Rover 100 was launched in December 1994, featuring new standards of refinement with performance in the small car market sector. There are six models in the range, with three- and five-door hatchback versions powered by the award-winning K-Series engine of 1.1 and 1.4 litre capacity, and a 1.5 litre diesel.



Mini

The Mini, launched in August 1959, introduced a new dimension to car design and a new motoring concept. There are two models all fitted with fuel injection, including the Mini Cooper 1.3i reviving memories of rally and motor sport successes in the 1960s.

PRODUCT RANGE



Rover Coupe

The striking Rover Coupe is a range of three high performance models powered by 1.6 litre and 1.8 litre K-Series engines and was originally launched in October 1992 and revised in the spring of 1996.



Rover Cabriolet

The Rover Cabriolet was originally launched in April 1992 and is already established as a stylish alternative to saloon car motoring, powered by the 1.6 litre K-Series petrol engine.



MGF

With the launch of the MGF, MG has been recreated as the classic British sports car, renowned the world over for affordable performance and motoring pleasure. The world-famous MG marque has returned to full sports car production following its reveal at the Geneva Motorshow in March 1995. Two versions of the MGF – the 1.8i and 1.8i VVC – are available, powered by a new 1.8 litre K-Series engine, the 1.8i VVC featuring a state-of-the-art, Variable Valve Control system.

Land Rover is the world's most famous specialist four-wheel drive manufacturer. The range of Defender, Discovery and Range Rover vehicles is sold in more than 100 markets around the world. Distribution in the major markets such as North America, Japan, Australia and South Africa – as well as key European markets – is through wholly-owned Rover Group subsidiaries. In other markets sales are handled by independent distributors. All UK production takes place at the Land Rover factory in Solihull, West Midlands. Land Rover also has seven assembly plants around the world.



Range Rover

The new Range Rover was launched in 1994. Widely acclaimed as the world's best off-road vehicle, it sells as an alternative to conventional luxury cars. The flagship Range Rover 4.6 HSE has a 4.6 litre V8 petrol engine whilst both a 4.0 litre V8 petrol engine and a 2.5 litre BMW turbo diesel unit are also available. All models have dual airbags, ABS and electronic air suspension.



Freelander

Due to be launched in early 1998, Freelander marks a new direction for Land Rover, combining permanent four-wheel drive with saloon car handling. Freelander will be available with a choice of petrol and diesel engines and in both 3 and 5 door body styles.



Discovery

Launched in November 1989, the Discovery range was extensively revised in 1994 including improvements to the interior and exterior and a new manual gearbox. The availability of twin airbags underlines Discovery's position as a leader in safety in the 4x4 market. Both 3 and 5 door version are available with either a 3.9 litre V8 petrol engine or a 2.5 litre direct injection diesel unit, both manufactured in-house.



Defender

The Defender range of utility vehicles can trace its origins back to the original Land Rover which has seen service in every country in the world in its 49 year history. Available in a variety of body and chassis combinations, all Defender models feature Land Rover's own 300 Tdi 2.5 litre direct injection diesel engine.



Special Vehicles

Land Rover Special Vehicles produce a wide range of conversions to suit individual customer requirements, all backed by a full Land Rover Warranty. Customers include public utilities as well as private owners who wish to personalise their vehicles.

ROVER GROUP'S WORLDWIDE OPERATIONS

The motor industry is a global undertaking involving worldwide marketing, technological partnerships and joint ventures spanning continents. Rover Group sells its Rover and Land Rover vehicle ranges in more than 100 markets. The company has wholly owned sales

organisations throughout Europe, North America, Japan, South Africa and Australia, with specialist importers in other territories.

The single objective is to provide extraordinary customer satisfaction wherever Rover and Land Rover vehicles are in use.

Abu Dhabi
Angola
Argentina
Austria
Australia*
Bahrain
Bangladesh
Barbados
Belgium*
Bolivia
Brazil
Brunei
Bulgaria
Burundi
Canada

Gabon
Germany*
Ghana
Gibraltar
Greece
Guadeloupe

India
Indonesia
Ireland
Israel
Italy*
Jamaica
Japan*
Jordan
Kenya
Korea
Kuwait
Latvia
Lebanon
Libya
Lithuania

Nicaragua
Nigeria
Norway
Oman
Pakistan
Panama
Papua New Guinea
Paraguay
Peru
Philippines
Poland
Portugal*
Qatar
Russia
Saudi Arabia

Turkey
Uganda

Uruguay
United States*
Vanuatu

Canaries
Chile
Colombia
Congo
Costa Rica
Croatia
Cyprus
Denmark
Dominican Republic
Dubai
Ecuador
Egypt
Falkland Islands
Finland
France*

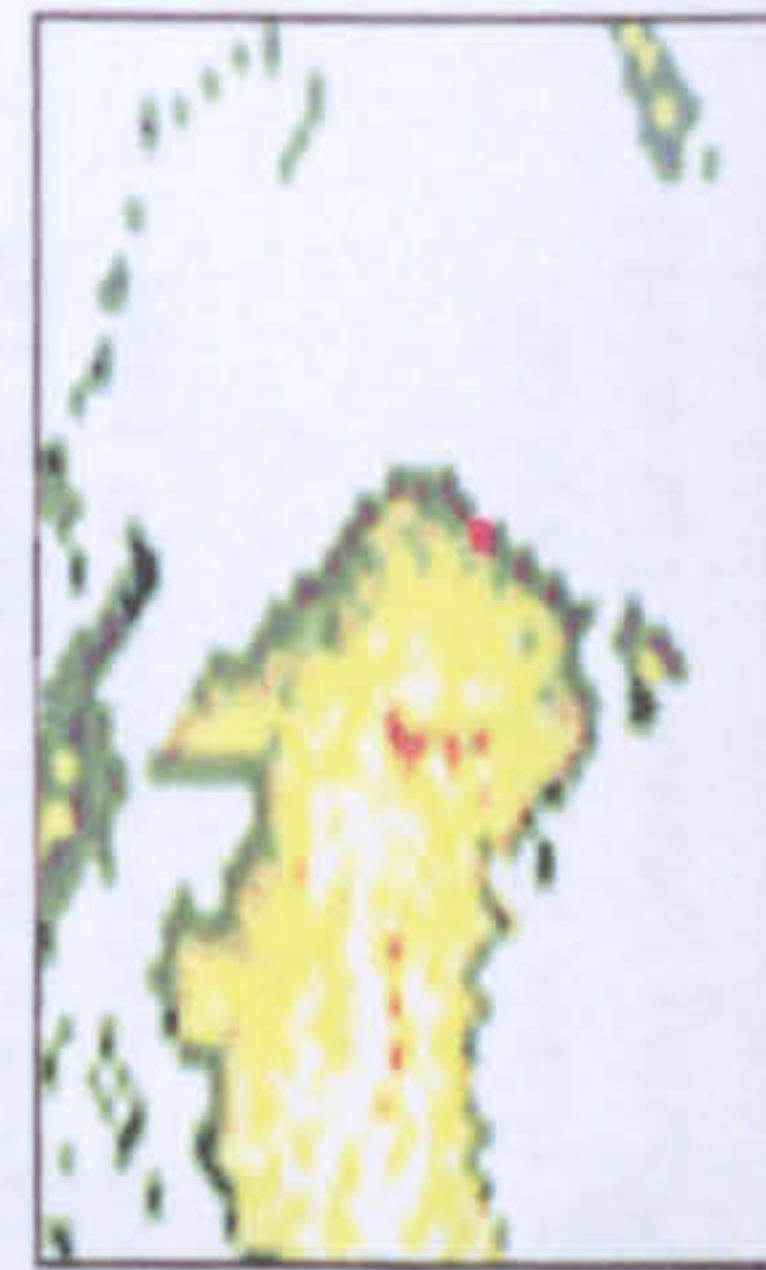
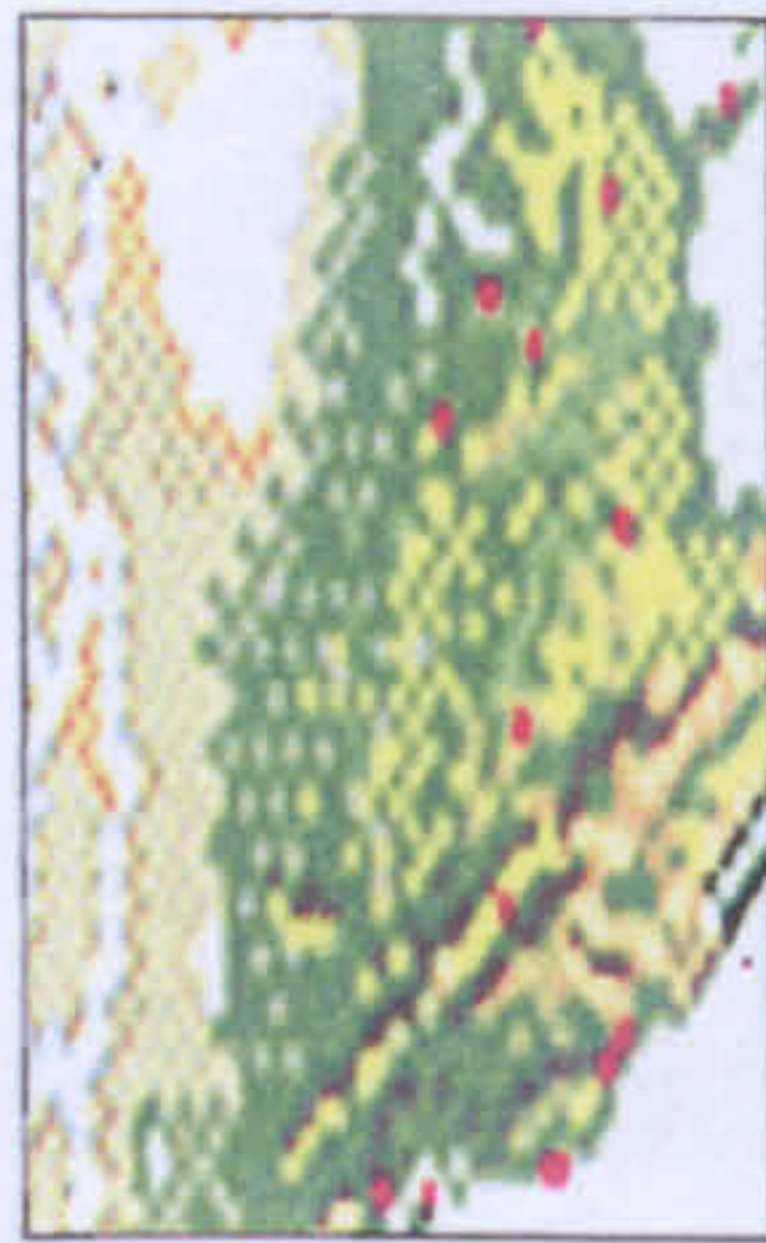
Guatemala
Guinea-Conakry
Guyana
Haiti
Hong Kong
Hungary
Iceland

Luxembourg
Macau
Madagascar
Malawi
Malaysia
Malta
Martinique
Mauritius
Mexico
Morocco
Myanmar
Nepal
Netherlands*
New Caledonia
New Zealand

Singapore
Slovenia
South Africa*
Spain*
Sri Lanka
Sudan
Sultanate of Oman
Sweden
Switzerland
Tahiti
Taiwan
Tanzania
Thailand
Trinidad & Tobago
Tunisia

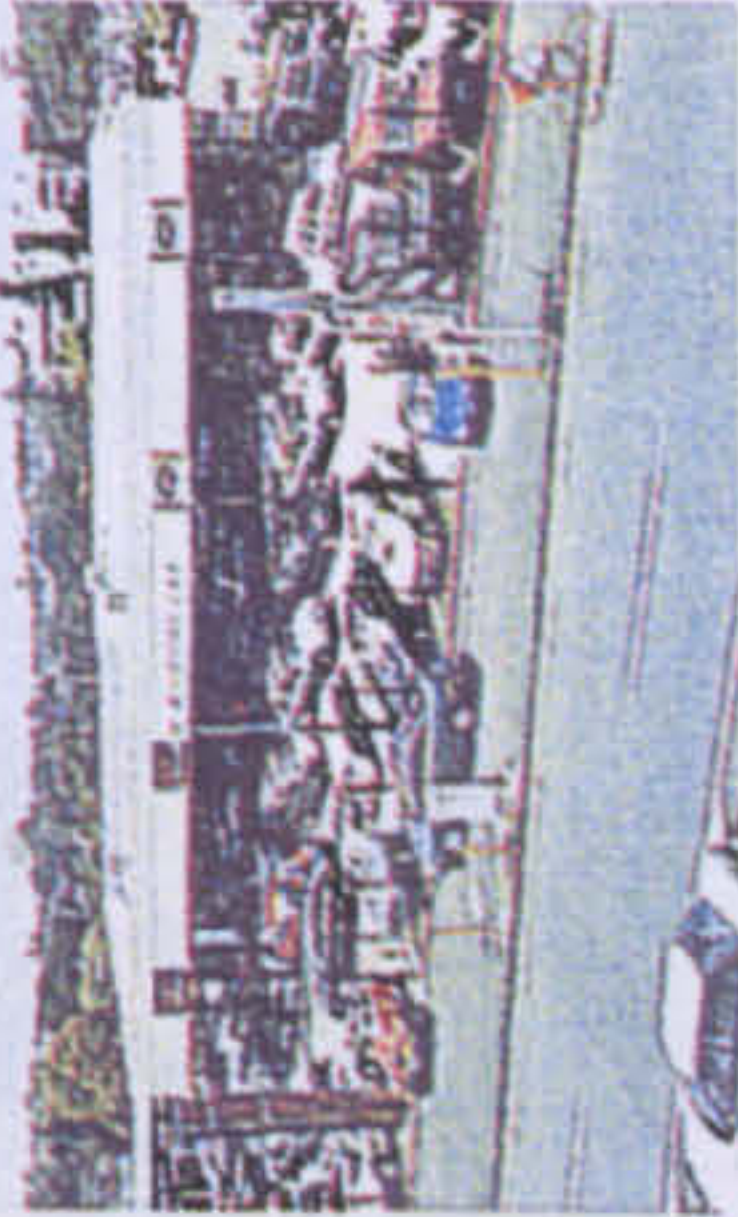
Venezuela
Zambia
Zimbabwe

*Denotes National Sales Company

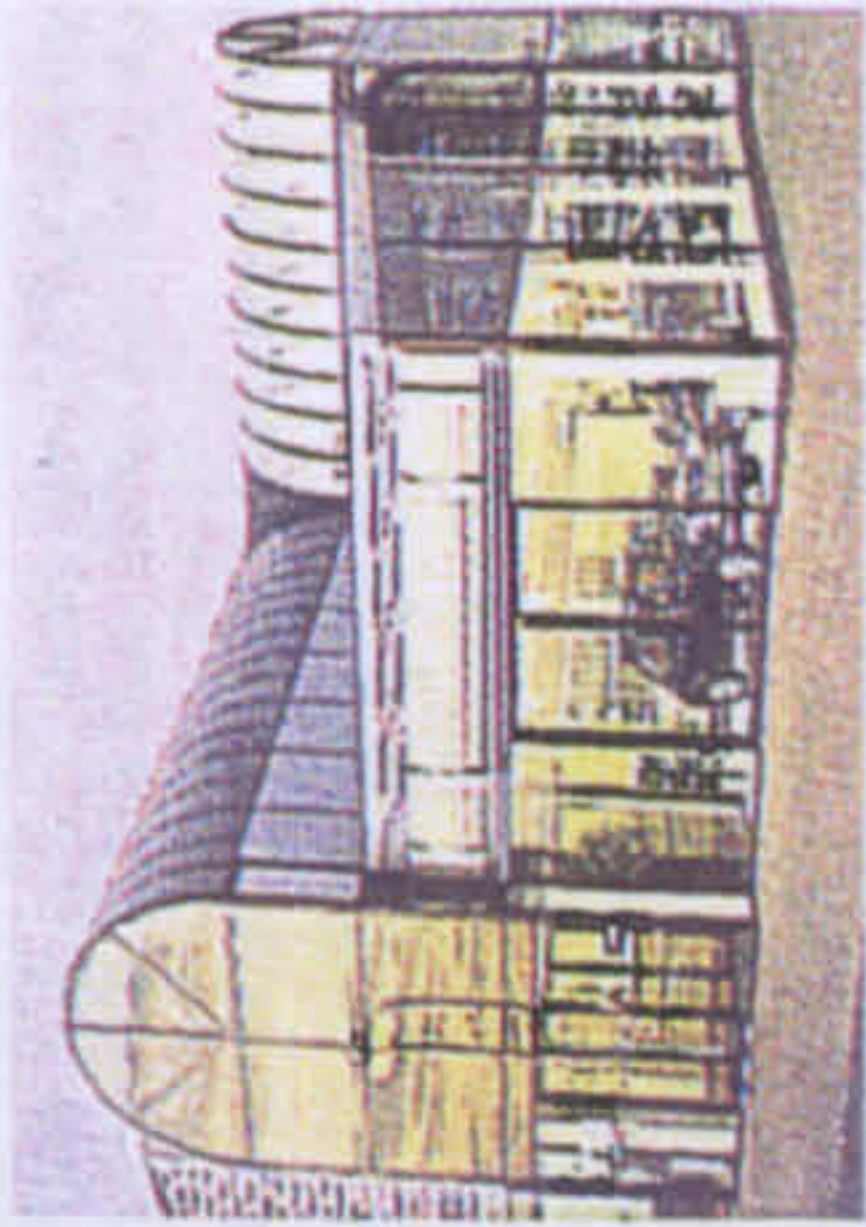


ROVER GROUP'S WORLDWIDE OPERATIONS

Rover Group's successful new product programme is spearheading expansion of existing international markets and the creation of new business opportunities throughout the world. Rover has wholly owned organisations for sales within Rover's major European markets, including the UK, and is investing heavily in expanding dealer networks in key markets such as Germany, while developing new markets within an expanding European trade area. Outside Western Europe Rover is creating new ventures in South America, Africa, the Middle East, Asia Pacific, Central and Eastern Europe. The Company has seen rapid growth in the established international National Sales Companies of North America, Japan, Australia and South Africa. The expansion of wholly owned subsidiaries has expanded this year in conjunction with BMW in markets of Mexico, Brazil, Sweden and South Korea.



An example is a major partnership project with KIA to develop the new KV6 engine for further applications. Also the Land Rover 300 Tdi diesel engine is being produced under licence in Brazil for commercial applications.



Throughout Rover's worldwide operations there is a strong corporate identity, based on the heritage of the Land Rover and Rover marques with high standards of customer care and sales and service support wherever a Land Rover or Rover vehicle is sold.

Rover Group has local assembly operations in a number of markets for its Land Rover and Rover vehicles as follows:

Land Rover	
Australia	- Defender
Kenya	- Defender
Malaysia	- Defender
Morocco	- Defender
South Africa	- Defender
Turkey	- Defender
Zimbabwe	- Defender

The vehicles produced are assembled from components transported from Rover Group's UK factories and from locally sourced suppliers as appropriate to the particular market.



The development of Rover Group associates and the training of dealer personnel is a pivotal part of the company's investment programmes. Rover invests about £30 million a year operating courses and development programmes in the UK and throughout the world. This ensures the highest standards of customer care wherever Rover and Land Rover vehicles are sold, backed by a comprehensive range of after-sales services.



Rover and Land Rover dealerships are investing in advanced systems to facilitate car selection and servicing. Innovative new vehicle distribution techniques are being introduced to shorten delivery times between factory and showroom ensuring that customers receive 'factory-fresh' vehicles.

ENGINE TECHNOLOGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The heart of a car is its engine and Rover engineers have developed advanced and innovative designs for the latest generation of power units for both Rover and Land Rover models. Petrol and diesel powered engines have been designed to give outstanding refinement and performance together with environmental advances in fuel economy and 'lean-burn' technology which results in cleaner engine emissions.

Rover and Land Rover historically offered the largest number of catalyst equipped cars in the UK and which are now standard across the model ranges.

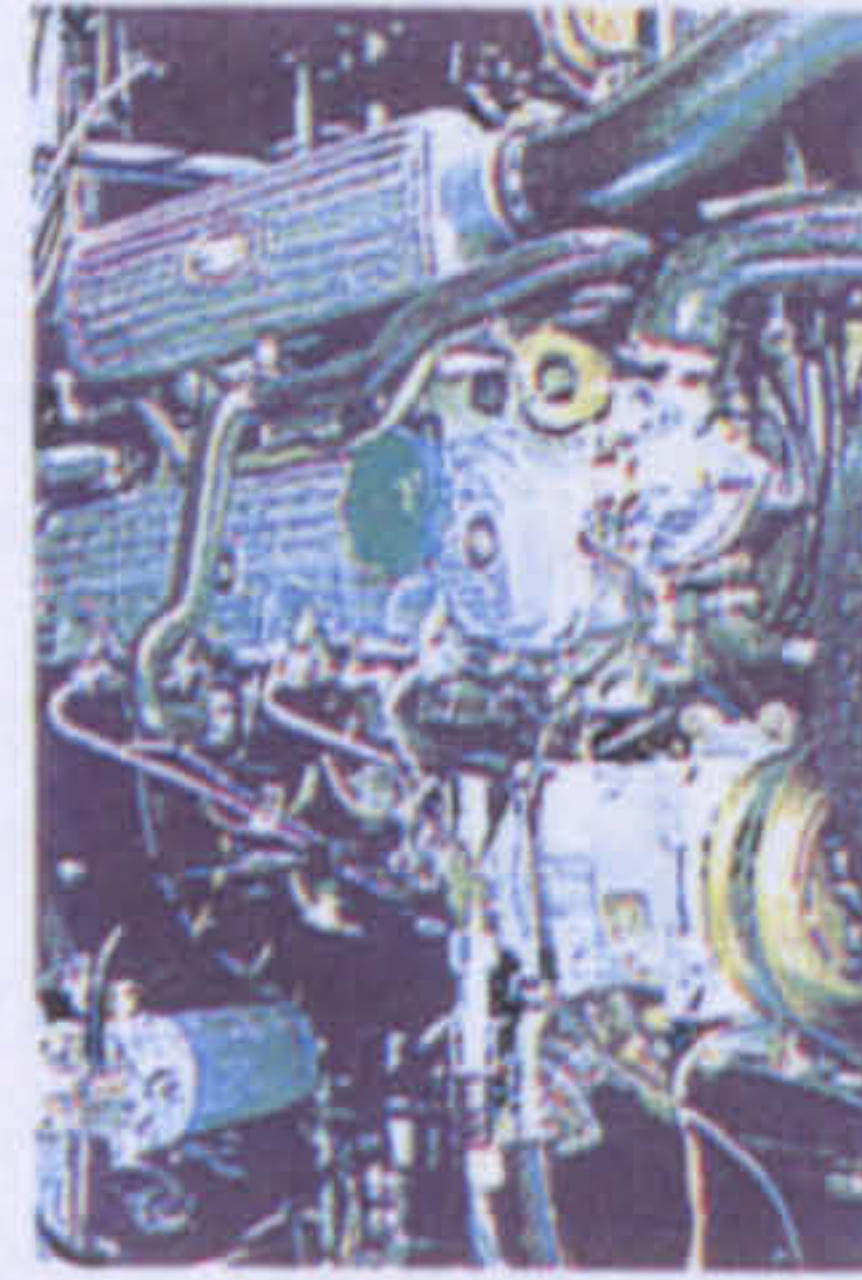
The Company's environmental policy extends to all its activities, including manufacturing processes, where CFCs are being eliminated, lead-free paint processes adopted and recyclable parts identified for future re-use.

Rover has started the UK's first vehicle recycling research project to increase the re-use of materials and to eliminate, as far as possible, waste by-products of vehicle disposal. Energy costs to build vehicles have dropped by 60 per cent in the past 10 years as a result of stringent energy management in the company's factories.



Rover KV6 engine

The new KV6 quad-cam 2.5 litre V6 engine, was launched in January 1996 as the flagship powerunit for the latest Rover 800 Series. Technical features include DOHC per bank, 2497cc, 4 valves/cylinder and a power output of 175Ps @ 6500rpm.



Land Rover 300 Tdi engine

The Land Rover 2.5 litre turbo charged intercooled high speed direct injection engine represents the latest diesel technology, combining class-leading fuel economy and emissions substantially below legislative limits. The high torque (pulling power) at low engine speeds delivers excellent road, off-road and towing capability. The 300 Tdi engine is used in the Discovery and Defender and Range Rover vehicles and has received the Queen's Award for Technological Achievement.

Queen's Award for Technological Achievement.

ROVER GROUP PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

Sales Revenue 1996

Total Sales revenue in 1996 was £6,475 million* confirming the Company's position as the UK's leading car producer.

Export Revenue 1996

Export sales revenue totalled £3,081 million* with 48 per cent of Rover Group's total sales made in export markets.

Vehicle Sales 1996

Vehicle sales totalled 507,254 units with Rover Cars sales totalling 382,031 units and Land Rover sales totalling 125,223 units.

Vehicle Production 1996

Total production was 504,100 units of which 377,300 units were Rover cars and 126,800 were Land Rover vehicles.

*consolidated figures.

ROVER GROUP AND THE UK ECONOMY

Largest manufacturer

The Rover Group is the UK motor industry's largest manufacturer, producing three out of every ten cars built in Britain and accounting for over a quarter of all British car exports.

The Company's activities support some 110,000 people in the UK's manufacturing and retail/distribution sectors. The Company spends nearly £4,000 million annually on materials and services bought from companies worldwide, but predominately from European sources.

ROVER GROUP LOCATIONS

The Group has three vehicle assembly factories and a number of component plants, product proving, engineering and administrative locations in the UK. The Group headquarters is at Warwick Technology Park, Warwick CV34 6RG.



Rover Group's largest car factory is at Longbridge, near Birmingham, where Rover 200, Rover 400, Rover 100 and Mini models are assembled. The factory manufactures the

MGF sports car in a specialist area. Also produced at Longbridge are engines, transmissions and castings.

ROVER GROUP LOCATIONS



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The company has concentrated all Design and Engineering Activities in a £30 million facility at the Gaydon Research Centre.

Below

The Range Rover, acclaimed as the world's best off-road luxury vehicle.

Back Cover

The Rover 600 series; an elegant and distinctive range of eleven models.



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APPENDIX: Exhibit A

Topic Menu used for interviews with Rover Group Management

CORPORATE POSITIONING AUDIT

TOPIC MENU

COMPANY NAME

INTERVIEWER

RESPONDENT INFORMATION

Name

Position

Company

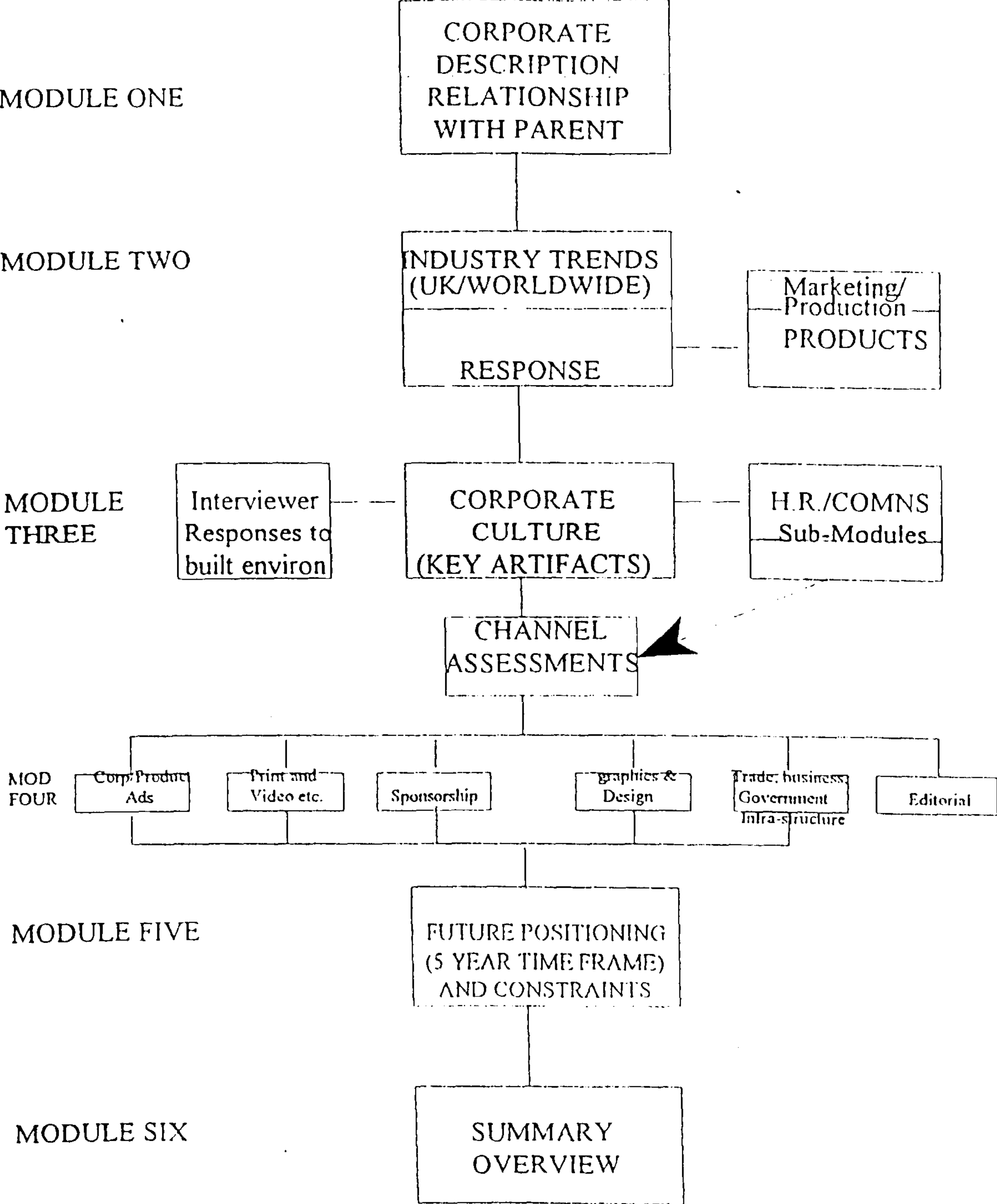
**Years with
Company**

**Previous
Work
Experience**
.....
.....
.....
.....

Interviewer

**Date of
Interview**

AUDIT CONSTRUCT (Core Modules)



MODULE 1

1. *CORPORATE DESCRIPTION & INTER-PARENT RELATIONSHIP*

1.1 How would you describe, in one paragraph, the Group? (ie. [products, services and activities it is involved in; size, geographical spread of operations, broad objectives, driving forces])

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

1.2 What is the Group's strategy? (eg. growth rate, profitability, international expansion)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

1.3 Are there any common beliefs or strategies (a shared "culture") that link together:

1.3.1. The companies

.....

.....

.....

1.4 What future developments can you foresee for the Group over the next 5-10 years?
(e.g. which business sectors/brands do you expect the group to increase/decrease its
involvement in? What degree of greater internationalisation will take place?)

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. *SWOT AND ATTRIBUTES*

2.1 What do you consider to be the greatest strengths as a group company?

1

2

3

Others

.....

.....

Comments

.....

2.2 What do you consider to be the main weaknesses?

1

2

3

Others

.....

.....

Comments

.....

.....

2.3 What do you think are the main opportunities

1

2

3

Others

.....

.....

Comments

.....

.....

2.4 What do you think are the main threats facing you?

1

2

3

Others

.....

.....

Comments

.....

.....

2.5 Can you discuss (open-ended) the subsidiary/parent relationship?

2.5.1 Currently how does this affect your company/division/s in your view?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2.5.2 In your view can your company develop its own identity. Is the fact it has an overseas parent an advantage.....

disadvantage.....

2.5.3 Where precisely to the cultures overlap?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2.5 Please evaluate the following attributes

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>High</u>		<u>Low</u>
	5	4	1
International
Diversified
Innovative
Competitive
Efficient
Technological leader
Dynamic
Progressive
Customer driven
Fast expanding ✓
Depth of market understanding ✓
Well known (corporately as group)
People oriented (training)
Modern
Quality of senior management
 ✓

3. ***SPECIFIC BRAND ATTRIBUTES***

3.1 What in your view are the strengths and weaknesses of each:

Strengths
.....
.....

Weaknesses
.....
.....

4. *COMPETITIVE SITUATION*

4.1 What do you think are the major competitors in order of importance?

As a Group

A.....

B.....

C.....

Others.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

MODULE TWO

5. *Industry trends and response*

Would you give an over-view of the direction in which you see the industry moving over the next ten years

5.1 Worldwide

.....

.....

5.2 Europe

.....

.....

5.3 U.K.

.....

.....

5.4 Specific comment relating to interests

.....


.....

.....

.....

5.5 Where do you see future technological development and its time-frame?

5.6 Have you any views on the future direction



MODULE THREE
CORPORATE CULTURE

6. CULTURAL SYSTEMS AND ARTEFACTS

6.1 How would you describe culture?

	Yes	No
Friendly
Relaxed
Hierarchical
Old fashioned
In state of change
Forward thinking
Strong
Competitive
Bureaucratic

6.2 From where in your view does the company culture derive? (ie. historical situation, from the Board, from current statement, from TQM programme?) [Also discuss remnants of past culture].

.....

.....

.....

6.3 Do the business units and functions have individual cultures?

.....

.....

.....

6.4 What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current culture?

Strengths.....

.....

.....

Weaknesses.....

.....

.....

7. MANAGEMENT DECISIONS


7.1 Who makes the strategic decisions eg. your business unit, the operations CHQ?

.....

.....

.....

7.2 How are problems solved? eg. Referred back to Head Office or special meeting? At what level?



7.3 How fast do you think ideas are processed within the company?

.....

.....

.....

7.4 How would you describe the corporate/group management

Yes No

In touch	.....
People oriented	.....
Open	.....
Individually successful as people	.....
Parochial/hold international viewpoint	.....

7.5 How much autonomy do you feel your business unit has from headquarters

.....
.....
.....

8. *MEASUREMENTS OF SUCCESS*

8.1 How is personal success measured: eg. profits, winning of customers technological development, contribution to company development, quality control - discuss performance indicators

.....

.....

.....

8.2 Under what circumstances do personnel/divisions receive public praise and where/how?

.....

.....

.....

9. *NON-RESPONDENT QUESTIONS*

To be completed by interviewer for each division/site visited:

- | | | |
|-----|---|---|
| 9.1 | Built Environment: | Smart
Coordinated
Modern
Tidy
Shabby
Reception area - first impression
Message projected is |
| 9.2 | Forms of Address: | First name terms
MD, Directors, managers, secretaries
Reception
Telephone manner |
| 9.3 | Style & Appearance: | 'Designer'
Formal
Casual
Uniform
Staff levels |
| 9.4 | Boundaries: | Open plan office
Junior staff-directors
Floor |
| 9.5 | Is there consistency between different sites? | |

MODULE 3 (SUB-GROUP A)

A. *PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT*

- A1. What is your recruitment process? eg. graduate milk-round; newspapers; trade journals.
Is recruitment centralised?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- A2. Do you consider able to attract and retain the calibre of staff it requires?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

- A3. What do you feel are the most important aspects which enables it to:
i) attract and ii) retain staff?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

A4. What are the weaknesses with regard to attracting and retaining staff?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

A5. How do you perceive in terms of equal opportunity programme, positive discrimination etc.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

MODULE 3 (SUB-GROUP B)

B. MARKETING AND SALES DEPARTMENT

B1 What is the „ Group marketing strategy? (external respondents only)

.....

.....

.....

B2. Please describe the marketing strategy of each marque?

.....

.....

.....

B3. Please discuss the effectiveness of your current marketing strategy and tactics.

.....

.....

.....

MODULE 3 (SUB-GROUP C)

C. PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT

C1. What is your perception of . public relations activity? (external respondents only)

.....

.....

.....

C2. Do you believe the Group's PR strategy is effective in supporting your business units

.....

.....

.....

MODULE 4

CHANNEL ASSESSMENTS

10. COMMUNICATIONS (GENERAL)

10.1 How do you think outsiders perceive \ Group

.....

.....

.....

10.2 Do you think these are accurate impressions?

.....

.....

.....

10.3 How would you like them to feel about \ Group?

.....

.....

.....

PAGE
NUMBERING
AS ORIGINAL

11. COMMUNITY RELATIONS

11.1 What is your impression of the Groups’ status and the role in the local communities in which it operates?

.....

.....

.....

11.2 Do you think it could do more or less?

.....

.....

.....

11.3 Who takes responsibility for community relations? i.e. HQ, each site manager?

.....

.....

.....

12 EDITORIAL

12.1 What are the strengths and weaknesses of the Groups' corporate/product press/media activity?

Strengths	Corporate	Product
1		
2		
3		
4		
Weaknesses		
1		
2		
3		
4		

12.2 What do you think about the quality of editorial coverage received

13. ADVERTISING

13.1 What is your opinion about the quality of advertising of _____ Group (discuss product and if relevant, corporate). What is the most memorable advertising?

.....

.....

.....

13.2 Is the advertising product-based or corporate-based? Do you think the balance is right?

.....

.....

.....

13.3 Do you think that _____ is saying the right messages in its advertising? Are there any other messages you think should be included? _____

.....

.....

.....

14. DESIGN AND PRINT

14.1 Please give your views on the effectiveness of your corporate/brand literature. eg. annual report, brochures, videos etc.

.....

.....

.....

To whom do you consider it is directed?

.....

.....

.....

14.2 What is your opinion of your sales literature?

.....

.....

.....

14.3 Do you think that your company has effective exhibition material? (Discuss message projected at motor shows etc.)

.....

.....

.....

15. CORPORATE IDENTITY

15.1 Do you think Rover Group is an appropriate name for the company? (give reasons). Are there dangers in Group carrying same names?

.....

.....

.....

15.2 What is the Rover Group logo or corporate design?

.....

.....

.....

15.3 What do you think the logo says about Rover Group?

.....

.....

.....

15.4 Would you change it? If yes, how and why eg. colour, shape?

.....

.....

.....

16. SPONSORSHIP

16.1 What is your opinion of current sponsorship activity? (Describe what you believe it is)

.....

.....

.....

16.2 Do you think Group should do more or less sponsorship?

.....

.....

.....

16.3 Do you think sponsorship has/would have value for the Group?

.....

.....

.....

17. GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

17.1 What is your opinion of Rover Groups' relations with Government at different levels?

Very Fairly Not so Weak
strong strong strong

Civil servants
Ministerial Level
MPs/MEPs
(ie. Select Committee members)
Local MPs/MEPs and Councils

17.2 What is your opinion of Rover's relations with:

Very Fairly Not so Weak
strong strong strong

Brussels at commission level
European Parliament

17.3 How important do you feel Government relations is for Rover Group in terms of general image?

.....
.....
.....
.....

17.4 Do you think Rover needs a higher profile with Government generally?

.....
.....
.....
.....

18. ISSUES MANAGEMENT

18.1 What are the key issues which affect Rover eg. social, environmental, technologically.

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....

18.2 Do you think Rover manages these issues effectively?

.....

.....

.....

.....

MODULE 5

Future Positioning (5-year time frame)

19. OBJECTIVES FOR FUTURE

19.1 Please state in one paragraph how you would like Group to be described as a Group in five years time.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

19.2 What are the likely constraints will encounter that will prevent it reaching that future objective.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

ADDENDUM TO MODULE 3

(Sub-set to be completed by Interviewer)

CORPORATE CULTURE

1. Comment under following three headings:

1.1 SIGNS (visible signification note SR's)

.....

.....

.....

1.2 Expressions (verbal, behaviour, etc.)

.....

.....

.....

1.3 Values (ideas and values as expressed during core interview)

.....

.....

.....

2. Note the following four values:

2.1 Social

.....

.....

.....

2.2 Managerial

.....

.....

.....

2.3 Employee

.....

.....

.....

2.4 Business

.....

.....

.....

3. **Discuss under four elements:**

3.1 What is (description)

.....

.....

.....

3.2 How (inter-relations and intergrations in form of causal-analytical attributions)

.....

.....

.....

3.3 Should (causal-normative attributions)

.....

.....

.....

3.4 Why (do certain things happen)

.....

.....

.....

4. Divide ritual analysis between:

4.1 The group who participate, include their audience

.....

.....

.....

4.2 The rituals symbolic system

.....

.....

.....

5. Consider following dimensions to the group (note during core interviews):

5.1 Nature of social relationship of the members (work colleagues, age, gender, etc)

.....

.....

.....

5.2 Length of time members have known one another

.....

.....

.....

5.3 Range of other activities the members are involved in

.....

.....

.....

APPENDIX: Exhibit B

Background history and development of the Rover company

ROVER GROUP: BACKGROUND HISTORY

I Introduction

The Rover Group as a corporate entity refers to the company that manufactured four marques: Rover cars, MG, Land Rover and the Mini during the years under review, 1995, 1996, 1997. It does not refer to the Rover car marque alone. The Group has been a wholly-owned subsidiary of BMW since 1994.

II Overview of Rover Group

The Rover company antecedents can be traced to 1861 when James Starley and Josiah Turner decided to utilise the skills of Coventry's watch-making industry to found the Coventry Sewing Machine Company. In 1869 they started production of bicycles and in 1877 John Starley broke away to join forces with a William Sutton to form a cycle company specialising in the production of penny-farthings and later, tricycles.

Starley had a vision that personalised transport could liberate people by allowing them to travel or 'rove around the country', as he called it. His safety bicycle was named the 'Rover' and by 1896 the company was called the Rover Cycle Company Ltd.

After the death in 1901 of Starley, the new managing director, Harry Smith, decided that Rover should make use of the internal combustion engine and by 1902 his 3- horsepower Imperial Motorcycle was marketed and a year later, following the recruitment of Edmund Lewis from Daimler, they started to build automobiles.

Within six months a prototype was completed and sales started in 1904.

The company expanded and when the First World War started they were sufficiently established to be commissioned by the government to build staff cars, ambulances and motor cycles for military service. After the war, as they returned to the manufacture of cars for private use, there was a loss of strategic direction with the company attempting to compete in too many markets. By the time of the depression, like many other motor manufacturers including Bentley, the Rover Company was on the verge of financial collapse.

It survived those difficult times, however, largely through the leadership of Spencer Wilks who by the early 1930s, as the economy improved, had the company back into profit. He restored the public's view of the company as a 'quality' manufacturer.

In 1935 new concepts in streamlining took hold of their designers and the first of a long line of sporty coupés were produced that filled the gap between the 'sit-up-and- beg' saloons of the day and the out-and-out sports cars. The Rover appealed to the aspiring middle-classes who could

not afford the Bentley, by now a subsidiary of Rolls Royce. Rover's niche market became that of the growing professional middle-classes such as accountants, lawyers and doctors. In fact Rover is still sometimes referred to as the 'doctor's car'.

During the Second World War their factories were converted to build Hercules aero engines and by 1945 Rover was running six shadow and twelve dispersal factories building, in addition to the Hercules, the Pegasus, Cheetah and Centaurus aero engines and sub-assembling Gloster Albermarles, Lancasters and Bristol aircraft.

After the war production reverted to Rover cars and they built a successful export business in a motor-hungry world. When Wilks's brother wore out his Willys Jeep on his farm in North Wales he designed a replacement which could double as a farm vehicle carrying cattle over rough country, yet was still suitable for trips into town. The result was the Land Rover which became the norm against which all other off-road vehicles were judged. It remained a highly profitable part of the business at the time of my study.

For the core Rover models their new designs throughout the 1950s and early '60s were advanced and maintained a modernist theme that combined the traditional Britishness of leather seating, wooden dashboards and thick carpets with an advanced exterior line and new technologies.

One of the first gas turbine engines to be fitted to cars was produced which performed well in competitions but with a fuel consumption of 4-6 miles to the gallon was unlikely to be a commercial success.

This succession of relatively successful Rover models maintained the Britishness of their dignified interiors and an emphasis on safe driving.

By the 1960s, however, the world automotive market had become increasingly competitive. Many-well known marques went out of business. In 1965 the managing director of Alvis asked Rover to take them over. Then by 1967 what became Alvis Rover was itself absorbed by Leyland Motors the controlling company of Standard Triumph.

World competition intensified and size in terms of manufacturing capacity became crucial for survival. The government intervened as brokers in the merger of the newly structured Leyland Motors and the company British Motor Holdings which contained Jaguar, Vanden Plas, Pressed Steel Fisher and the British Motor Corporation.

The merger took place in 1968 and resulted in the formation of a new company the British Leyland Corporation. The events that followed, however, appeared to combine poor industrial relations with a range of complicated corporate political situations at a time when their models were failing to meet the demands of a growing but changing consumer demand.

The adventurous new middle-classes who formed their core market turned to mainland Europe or Scandinavia for their cars and the Jaguar/Rover/Triumph marques became increasingly vulnerable to Japanese imports. Although the Rover marque was profitable the overall company BLMC was not and the group became bankrupt.

In 1974 the government injected large sums of money into the company and set up a committee under Lord Ryder to report on its future. The recommendation was to make the government a major shareholder through capital refinancing, in effect nationalisation.

Michael Edwards was appointed chairman in 1977 and a massive restructuring took place. By 1986 a new chairman, Graham Day, had taken over and renamed the company the Rover Group and a process of denationalisation followed. There were failed bids by Ford for the whole company and by General Motors for Land Rover but British Aerospace finally acquired the Group in 1988. New models proliferated and Rover operated as an independent subsidiary of British Aerospace with Honda holding a 20% stake and having its Concerto model assembled by Rover in the UK.

This period of close co-operation with the Japanese Honda company was important for the company in human resource management as well as engineering terms. In 1994 the Rover Group was bought by BMW.

The last few decades of almost continuing change have left their mark especially on those members of staff who have remained with the organisation. There was comment during my interviews of how past history still maintained a front of mind position for many senior managers. The combination of a long history at the centre of the British motoring tradition with that of a post-war story of poor management plus equally bad industrial relations forms part of the backdrop for my analysis.

During 1996 when the bulk of my interviews were being completed a report was prepared for the director of corporate communications, discussing whether the Rover Group should increase its visibility as a company with its own positioning or whether it should concentrate its promotional activity behind the individual marques, thus positioning them in the marketplace simply as brands within an overall BMW umbrella.

The decision was taken that Rover as a Group should seek its own positioning and grow a personality which would cascade down to the marques. It would provide a set of values upon which each marque could build its own character. The positioning described in Chapter III and the role of such positioning in Chapter IV, was accepted as the framework for this policy and the process of implementation began. Before its completion, however, BMW sold a large part of the company to a consortium, founded by John Towers, called the Phoenix Group. BMW

maintained ownership of the Mini marque and sold off Land Rover separately.

EXHIBIT C: 5th Sam Epelle Memorial Lecture, Lagos. 1992

NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

5th Sam Epelle Memorial Gold Paper Public Relations Lecture

Date: 9 SEPTEMBER, 1992

Venue: COMMERCE HOUSE, VICTORIA ISLAND, LAGOS.

TOPIC

**COMMUNICATING FOR GROWTH
- THE ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS
IN CORPORATE STRATEGY**

Speaker

MR. REGINALD WATTS,

Past President, British Institute of Public Relations,
Past Chairman, Public Relations Consultants Association,
Deputy Chairman, Citigate Corporate, London.



Nigerian Institute of Public Relations
Professionalism & Excellence

1992 SAM EPELLE MEMORIAL GOLD PAPER PUBLIC RELATIONS LECTURE

TOPIC COMMUNICATING FOR GROWTH - THE ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN CORPORATE STRATEGY

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Ladies and Gentlemen. First of all may I thank you for honouring me with this invitation. The forward thinking and professional attitude towards public relations exhibited by the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations is known worldwide and particularly with the British I.P.R. In many ways the Nigerian Institute and its members are trail blazing. The way they have integrated communications and the decision making process of senior management and government, is the envy of us all.

All the more reason for me to thank you for allowing me to indulge in that pursuit so beloved of PR men and women - talking... and talking to a captive audience.

Let me take you back. The year is 1970 and I am advising the chairman and CEO of one of Britain's largest electronic engineering companies - a world player - they are on the way to announce a major government defense contract at a time when they are standing off staff. We agree the strategy and decide part of the implementation will be an immediate news release to the press - to be followed later by a number of follow-on actions. We finish the discussion and the chairman says "fine, I have a meeting to go to. Reginald, would you mind taking our agreed release over to the PR people to get them to issue it..." First area of enlightenment. Until then I hadn't realised they had a PR operation. I leave the office and ask the way to the public relations department. I start walking down a path, across a few open spaces, down a passage, past the refuse collection area and eventually I find a porta cabin - one of those temporary shack like cubes, in a far corner of the site. Here, ensconced in splendid isolation is the company's in-house public relations department. Efficient, professional, well-organised and doing all the right things. They're all members of the professional institute and I'm welcomed like Moses carrying his tablets from Mount Sinai - a look of awe on their faces as they realise that I've been in the presence, not of God but someone far higher - their Chairman and I am also a PR man like them.

The purpose of recounting that symbolic experience is to lay emphasis on the remarkable change that has taken place in the role of communications; sometimes called public relations, sometimes public affairs, within government and commercial life. When I first became active in government affairs 20-30 years ago, the most derogatory comment you could make about someone was that they were all style and no content - which from the mouth of the normal stiff upper lip strangulated British politician of that time - meant that the recipient of the insult was actually able to

communicate and talk well. 'If a public audience understood a speech it couldn't be very profound' was their attitude to life. Today you can't spit in Parliament Square London, without hitting a dozen Members of Parliament who are so stylish and articulate that they ought really to be in show business.

Let me coin a new motto for the commercial institution of the 1990's - HOW ABOUT "NON QUOD FACIO, SED QUOMODO ME GERO" - or put in a way that Frank Sinatra would have felt more at home with: "It's not what you do, it's the way that you do it!" - a sigh of relief from the non-classicists among you.

Previously, the agendas of most company directors meetings - especially at business planning time - would contain items concerned with management structure, research and development, financial reports, personnel and possible government relations. The latter normally meant which government minister had been lunched by the chairman in the previous month.

The Union Carbide disaster at Bhopal and the Exxon Valdez environmental disaster, sundry healthcare problems such as the Nestles baby food problem here in Africa, the growth in consumerism, then of political pressure groups, then of the worldwide environmental lobby, have all changed the business agenda in most board-rooms. Suddenly it has become apparent that perception is not the most important thing, it is the only thing, and that companies can remain no longer in the garden of remembrance resting on past reputation. They have to open the gate and enter a new world where communications and public relations are not the purveyors of policy but are today the policy itself.

People didn't really understand Marshall McLuhan in the sixties when he said the media was the message, except at a micro tactical level. Now it has been realised that those poor, hard-done by PRO's in the shed at the end of the factory site - I mentioned earlier - are needed as they alone have the basic knowledge to inject their professional skills into the fundamental strategy of the company. The media is indeed the message in that communications messages and their impact are so important that you cannot separate the message from its cause, nor separate the need for the message from the policy itself.

Whether the company sees its future positioning as based upon a pricing strategy or on a policy of differentiation, or whether the sole concern is about being seen to be different to their competitors - the important constituent factors after cost control are all about perception. A pricing strategy doesn't really mean you sell on price alone - how would people know if you don't tell them and anyway customers (whether they are consumer or industrial, a client service or a professional firm) don't buy on price

alone - who wants to buy a Mercedes without an engine or an airline that's always late. Inherent in any price paid is a degree of product differentiation or fulfilment of a need. So perception and reputation come into play.

I use these words perception, reputation, public relations, rather than communications, because the word communications has so many meanings (not least its association with IT communication) and to many it implies an emphasis on the message and the long term strategy behind it. When I use the words public relations I am referring to the total process of building reputations, creating understanding, even what is referred to in the jargon now as 'information transfer'. Years ago the slightly sleazy British newspaper 'The News of the World' noted more for its sexual exposures than its philosophical discourse, advertised under the slogan "All Human Life is Here". Perhaps we, in public relations should in a slightly censored format claim that we too are concerned with all human life. Homo sapiens is indeed a gregarious animal and once we accept that everybody from village tribal life to global geo-politics is concerned as individuals about building relationships and understanding them then the public relations role moves firmly from the back of the parking lot into the decision-making suite.

How then do we fulfil and assist organisation heads, boards of directors and government policy makers? I would argue that just as the accountant forms part of the strategic policy making not just because he specialises in figures but because he brings a financial element into play as he or she debates non-financial elements of policy - so too the senior public relations practitioner brings the equally important element of perceptions, public relations, and the generation of understanding, into the way he or she contributes to the policy debate. Their training may be in public relations but their views are about the central core of the corporate strategy, those views moulded or adjusted perhaps, by the communications knowledge that will affect their thinking and the way they offer solutions at strategic level to a business problem.

This is a quantum step away from the PR practitioner restricting comment to the communications implications of the policy itself. Just as a senior lawyer or government official will not restrict themselves to the narrow area of their own expertise, so too must the public relations executive assume they have a significant contribution to make on any strategic macro level, because they as intelligent people will bring to bear their particular approach to a situation which is of equal value to any other discipline.

What is happening now, is that public relations is bringing its own methodologies into the business discipline. From being a matter of subjective "feel", a craft rather than a science, a belief that soft culture subjects should somehow not have the restraining hand of quantification, rigorous intellectual discipline and measurement placed on them, the profession has now taken a giant leap into post Reagan, post Thatcher, post economic 'down turn' business thinking. All is now systems, disciplines and quantified measurement.

The bedrock of so much work we in the public relations profession do nowadays for corporations and institutions whether they are governmental or charitable, is something we call 'positioning'. It is a difficult word to explain. It is not a slogan - although we may sometimes encapsulate a part of the positioning with a slogan to energise or provide clearer imagery for the basic statement. Nor should a positioning run to more than the proverbial one side of A4 paper (and that is not an excuse for miniature type-faces -as I have seen on occasions). Above all, it is a statement that describes what the company or institution makes, does or offers, for whom, and the philosophy that drives it. It is the encapsulation of what the company is about in one or two paragraphs. The tough part is getting that statement down on paper in such a way that it could not be used about any other company - especially a competitor. It is the essence of what you are about and what makes you so different that staff want to work for your organisation, customers want to deal with you, financial institutions want to lend you money, local committees want you in their midst and governments want to help you and listen to your point of view.

Getting it right, with the correct emphasis takes time. Outside opinion-leaders, business pundits, researchers, customers and even competitors all need to be interviewed against a clear topic menu of subjects - about reality and aspiration. The data collected has to be correlated against data collected through interviews on the same topic menu within the organisation. The objective is to distil the essence of the real company and not just what its leaders like to think is the reality of the company. By matching both sets of responses it becomes possible to articulate what the company is and wants to be against what is acceptable by the outside world and needed by customers, financial or government institutions and potential staff.

The result in written statement form becomes the engine that drives the communications plan (knowing it is the right one to fulfil the corporate objectives and strategy) and acts as the strategy check against which all activity that impinges on the external - and internal audience - is judged. It affects the visual style of the organisation both graphics and design and it generates the issues and subjects upon which the chief executive or chairman will speak in public, it shapes the sales and

marketing messages that will be used to sell the products or services and it becomes the basis for the sponsorship, the local community involvement and the way the organisation is presented to government. In effect, by laying so much emphasis on the ability to articulate the corporate communications plan, it is ensuring that the business plan will meet its objectives because - providing the cost structures and distribution are in place - everything the company does in terms of the outside world involves getting perceptions and understanding right. This only happens when everyone sings one song and keeps repeating it until the total environment within which the organisation exists has absorbed and accepted the message. Once the external positioning becomes the natural reflection of the strategy and business plan, and once the whole company's staff accept and project it, the total programme will have direction.

From here on the design of the programme falls into place and all that remains is for a system of measurement to be applied. Measurement at various stages, to see whether the various target audiences have accepted or rejected the messages, measurement of the number of times they had the opportunity to hear or see the message, and finally the ability of the audience to feed back through interviews the messages projected and developed is a crucial stage in that all important process of whether we are giving and getting value for money. Tracking the success or otherwise of the channels we use to carry our message is so important that without this research you can assume that half the budget is wasted. Would you run an advertising campaign without measuring its effectiveness?

So much of public relations is at a macro level - editorial, brochures, information services, graphics and visuals, sponsorship of art and sport, that the achievement of real success is only possible if the systems we use are constantly checked, measured and adjusted. The diagnostic element of the research process becomes as important as the measurement of total success or failure.

Fortunately the growth in computer networking and readily accessible IT power has come just at the right moment when public relations has come of age. The umbrella of macro activity I have just mentioned is crucial. It is through that activity that we build relationships with an audience and avoid the almost militaristic attitude of an organisation acting like a great cannon or gun, shooting out messages at an unsuspecting audience with success measured by the kill rate of those hit rather than those who accept and remember the message. This old fashioned approach prevalent in the advertising industry was too easily accepted in the early days as the foundation philosophy of public relations as well.

Today we tend to use our techniques to build relationships, create participation and generate understanding through involvement.

However, there is still a need to pin-point targets with the accuracy of a sniper and project towards that person not a bullet but a soft can of messages that previous research has shown will be not only acceptable, but welcomed also. Doing this has only become possible through the explosion of computer power and the availability of complex data-bases which allow people like ourselves to select smaller and smaller groups of people to receive narrowly designed messages and concepts that have a special interest for those selected. Previously we might have developed lists of teachers, lawyers or even aeroplane spotters and wild life fanatics as a target for direct mailing. This may have been useful but hardly momentous in its impact.

Today we can do the same thing by preparing single core messages to go out to millions of people but within each overall message there can be modules that vary for smaller and smaller groups, each with a response to specific lifestyles and attitudes towards your company that have already been researched.

When Alvin Toffler the American futurologist said in 1980 in "The Third Wave" "there will come a time when everyone will have their own magazine, specially prepared for them and reflecting their own individual interests, hopes and aspirations," he wasn't far off the mark. For within the next few years such micro selection within micro projects will be the norm of our professional daily life. One of the accepted tools of our trade.

A typical public relations programme designed and written on screen will prepare editorial schedules by readership penetration and opportunity to see. It will be linked so that reprints of the articles that appear will be overprinted with marked paragraphs that vary according to the interests of the recipient and then sent with individually prepared covering notes - the whole process covering perhaps 8-10 million people. IT has given us the tools to change every part of the public relations practitioners life. What is a normal part of such programmes in the United States for election campaigns will soon be the norm for all of us here in Nigeria and in Europe.

The concept of public relations and the total communications process applies not only to commercial policy making. It has become a part of inter-government influences in the sphere of global politics.

All the signs are, dangerous though they may be, that the world is moving into a small number of regional trading blocks with an inclination to navel gazing and erecting external barriers. No one says this publicly and the commitment to world free trade is still the cry on most politicians lips but the economic pressures of the nineties are such that trade barriers may become the only answers available as a government response to commercial pressure and inward leaning trading barriers will be built one brick at a time.

Ask Japanese, German, US or British senior business people to name the industries they consider necessary in this and the next decade to give their citizens a world class standard of living. They will all list the same industries:

- Micro-electronics
- Bio-technology
- Materials science industries
- Telecommunications
- Civil aviation
- Robotics and machine tools
- Computer power and ever more sophisticated software

Where have all the idealistic beliefs of the sixties and seventies gone. Those beliefs and ideals that argued even the smallest nation or non-industrialised region can find an industry buyer or niche market where they can compete and make an honest crust. Cross frontier computer networks demand high levels of technology skill. Manufacture and service activities will be strung like a necklace between countries within geographical regions. Such networks will provide companies with the common back-up needed in terms of skills, training, academic inputs, sub-contractors to produce new products and respond to market change. This transformation of the business infrastructure will put increasing pressure on regional competitiveness and slowly but surely exclude the services, previously provided by firms and countries outside that trading block.

Strategic alliances within Europe, across the Pacific Rim, within the North America/Mexico circuit, are moving so fast now as a response to each others competitiveness that they are assuming the characteristics of the Japanese Kiretshu, whereby cohorts of companies band together to service each other without any formal contract or equity holding, to fight and sell against other Kiretshus.

Because every government is fighting on behalf of their business community for markets the pressure to put up non-tariff, non-formal, non-financial barriers is tremendous. Resisting such pressure for those countries outside such power groupings will need a greater use and understanding of the power of communications than ever

before. The need will grow to appeal directly over the heads of democratic governments to each others populations and therefore their electorates to resist the pressure to close ranks against the outsider. Hitherto the old contacts between heads of state were enough. Today the upward commercial pressures from the populations have become so great that the only way to achieve policy change is to argue your case in the public arena - showing that economic fortress building and inward looking trade groups have inherent disadvantages - the role of the public relations practitioners and communications consultant, seen at its most obvious with Saatchi & Saatchi's work on behalf of the British Conservative Party at election time will grow as it moves into more and more sectors of government policy making. Already commercial concerns are multiplying their use of public relations as they apply pressure onto government. From local lobbying of M.P.'s it has widened to the shaping of public attitudes in order to apply longer term pressures on government.

The next stage will be for governments of countries seeing themselves closed out of the hegemony of regional trade groups, exerting their own pressure on national policy making through direct access to those national populations. Someone said diplomacy was war by other means - soon it will be that international public relations will be war by other means. You don't invade Kuwait to get at their oil; you invade the public arena by focusing your PR campaigns on policy making objectives to change the policies of Kuwait's government.

The world is moving so fast that the underlying trends are frequently unobserved until the results have appeared. Or put another way - all action is premature until its too late.

Harold Burson called the public relations practitioner 'the sensor of social change'. Today he's become the sensor of geo-political and corporate change - clumsier to say but more accurate.

The symptom of an acceptance of this need to change, by companies and governments alike, is the extent to which they have hauled the public relations practitioner and the skills he brings to the table, into the inner sanctum of policy development. Gaining competitive advantage is today about how easily you accept the fact that perception and reality have become blurred. Those that come to terms with the explosive need for more effective communications will be the winners in the last years of this century and first years of the next - the leadership of audiences such as those present here today will be paramount.

- END -